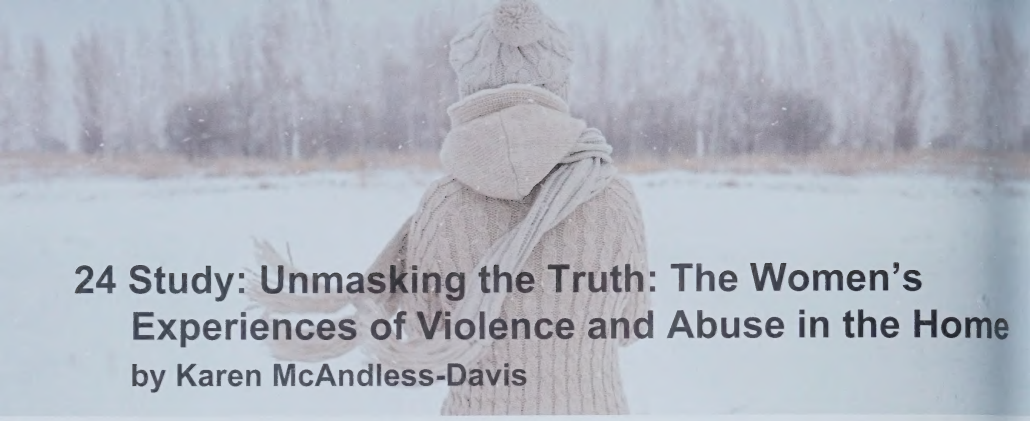
Glad Tidings

January/February 2016

oto: PWS&D/Paul Jeffrey



24 Study: Unmasking the Truth: The Women's Experiences of Violence and Abuse in the Home

by Karen McAndless-Davis

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **Building a Comfortable Pew**
by Linda Kreklewetz Shaw

8 **They will Know We are Christian by our Love**
by Lynne Donovan

14 **Helping Students to Learn**

18 **Reflections on Guatemala**
by Susan McLennan

39 **Mission In Action**

46 **Memorials**

IN THE SOCIETY

36 **WMS ... Did You Know?**

42 **In the Society**

47 **Remembering**

The cover photo was provided by Presbyteiran World Service & Development. The photographer is Paul Jeffrey.

Glad Tidings

January/February 2016
Volume 92, No. 1
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2016 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

Editorial

I am not usually at a loss for words, but I have been for the past few weeks. Perhaps, it is just bad timing. The news these days leaves me feeling overwhelmed. I wonder what to tell my children about recent events around the world. I don't want to leave them in fear, but I want them to be informed citizens. I wonder how to pray and what to pray for. I wonder how to act and react. I wonder how to live a life worthy of my calling.

Today as I reflect on this, I am drawn to the quote, "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." It is a lovely and inspiring image of the change that is possible. In this month's *Glad Tidings*, you will read wonderful stories of change. Stories of those that cast a stone. Stories of ripples.

Linda Shaw, almost 25-years ago, began to walk with adults living with a disability. She cast her stone, and what beautiful ripples have been created in the lives of those who walk alongside her in this ministry as leaders, participants, and entire congregations.

St. Andrew's Picton has also cast their stone. They looked out at their community and found a ministry that they were perfectly situated to act on. They began an after school ministry for young girls. The ripples are being seen in girls that are gaining skills, enthusiasm, and confidence. It is changing lives.

The Women's Missionary Society has long been casting their stones and creating ripples. This year's international Together We Can! project will benefit the lives of the Maya Mam women of Guatemala. Read their stories and you will see their ripples.

As you read this, a new year will be beginning, filled with dreams and hopes. Some, will be making new resolutions. Some, will be setting goals. Most, will be looking forward. For me, I hope to be casting stones. I have yet to know what that looks like, but that will be my prayer: that I may cast a stone that creates a positive ripple in the life of another. Blessings as you look for ways to cast your stone in 2016!

Building a Comfortable Pew

by Linda Kreklewetz Shaw

Hi, my name is Vicky and I am vision impaired. It is important for people to speak to me and tell me their name. Today I am sitting with my house-mate, Marie, and a friend from church is helping us to follow the service. My favourite part is the music!

At our General Assembly in 2014 (and in 2012), our denomination committed itself to focus on congregational renewal. For most congregations, that means fulfilling their dream for more children, more youth, and more young adults sitting in the pews; and of course, a renewed and enthusiastic commitment to love God and people. I think that renewal means asking the Lord to show us what we are to do in this time and place; and the answer can be quite surprising and will vary from congregation to congregation.

My home church (St. Paul's, Simcoe, ON) has been seeking to renew the building, the worship service, and its people for many years and we have made significant progress; and yes, we do have more

children, and a few youth and younger adults. God has also surprised us. Our church has been renewed by a large number (usually 10 or more) of adults living with an intellectual disability (and often physical disabilities), who have found a comfortable pew on Sunday mornings.

So what happened? Well, we had a couple of long-standing members with disabilities, who had grown up in our church so they seeded the clouds. And about five years ago, we started a mid-week fellowship group, "Friendship in Faith" and extended an invitation widely in our community. Some of more than 24 participants at Friendship in Faith already had a church home, but those that didn't were encouraged to come to St. Paul's on Sunday mornings, and they did, and they stayed.

What do people living with a developmental disability want from a church home? The same thing you and I do; and let's be honest, we all live with some disabilities and as we age, we expect those disabilities may increase. What do they/we want?

- People to speak to them and know them by name.
- People to be friendly during the coffee hour and not leave us on our own.
- To see others at the same stage of life as us in the congregation.
- Pew neighbours to speak to us and greet us.
- Good music.
- A chance to hear God's voice and speak to God.
- An opportunity to be "useful" and use our gifts.
- A ride to church if we need it.
- Physical access to the building.
- Special things to do that are not happening on Sunday morning (Potlucks, Men's groups, Games Nights).

My name is Melody and Linda is my "family." I am a member at Westwood Presbyterian Church and like to take up the offering.

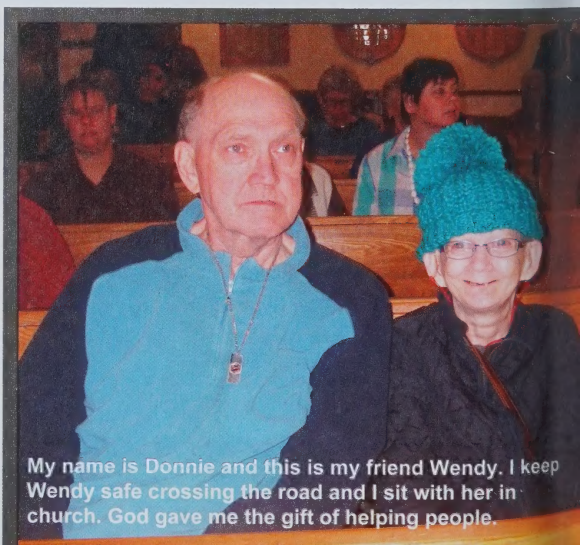
- Friends from Sunday morning that will include us in their lives outside of Sunday morning.
- Change needs some warning and it needs to be gradual.

When I asked my friends with disabilities, who live with their parents and/or caregivers what they don't like, the list wasn't long, but included:

- Don't call us boys or girls or kids. We are adults!
- Don't boss us around like we are children.
- Don't speak over us as though we are not there, or we don't understand.
- Some of us don't speak with words, but we still have things to share in other ways.
- Don't assume we can't read and write or have other special gifts (and just maybe we can do some things better than you).
- Don't look at us if we make a noise in church or stand at the wrong time.

God introduced me to this special ministry of coming along side adults living with a disability almost 25 years ago at Westwood Presbyterian Church, Winnipeg, and it has been one of my passions ever since. I often tell "church leaders" that it is one of the few things I have done in the church that never gets me any complaints from the participants, but only a whole lot of personal blessing! I believe the 12 or so leaders, from three denominations in Simcoe, who presently support this ministry, would agree that it is just a whole lot of fun! Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, puts it well when he said, "Their place is not at the margins of society and of the church, but at the centre, urging and calling us all to open up to the fundamental truth of our being; they can then become our healers."

Linda Shaw is presently the Coordinator of Children and Worship for The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Coordinator for Friendship in Faith in Simcoe, ON. Anyone interested in finding out more about starting a Christian fellowship group for adults living with a developmental disability may contact her by email at ianandlindashaw@gmail.com.



My name is Donnie and this is my friend Wendy. I keep Wendy safe crossing the road and I sit with her in church. God gave me the gift of helping people.

WE RESPOND

Thank you WMS!

Thanks to your amazing support in 2015, thousands of women, men and children across the globe are building brighter futures and seeing positive, lasting change in their communities.

Together, we can continue to forge long-term solutions to global poverty and build a more sustainable, compassionate and just world.

Presbyterian World Service & Development

50 Wynford Drive
Toronto ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291

WeRespond.ca

They will
are Christians

Reaching for Rainbows

Reaching for Rainbows is an after-school program for vulnerable girls established by St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Picton. Our region has the highest teen pregnancy rate in Ontario, and 40 percent of the children at the elementary school are lagging behind physically, emotionally, and academically due to intergenerational poverty that also is connected to alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental illness.

St. Andrew's is a church of about 70 households. We are small, but we have a big vision for loving the world the way that Jesus loved, and we are committed to developing community partnerships in order to pursue this vision. We could imagine an after school program in our hall for girls at risk because we are located two blocks from the elementary school. When we asked those who worked in the field, including the schools, what these girls needed they responded as follows: a safe place, a place to learn inter-personal skills, and a place where they would be affirmed for who they were.

We launched Reaching for Rainbows in October 2011 and immediately we were filled to capacity because of the children referred to us by teachers, Children's Mental Health, or Children's Aid. The foundation of our program is a play-based learning model with a low adult-child ratio where girls develop skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and decision-making as well as skills that will contribute to school success.

But Reaching for Rainbows is more than a program. The gospel tells us that we are healed, fed, and

The children develop a sense of trust very quickly at Reaching for Rainbows because the program allows for their ideas and recommendations to be heard.

Know We by our Love

by Lynne Donovan

encouraged to shine our light when we belong to a healthy community. We know that one of the ways that Jesus built healthier communities was by inviting people to the table. The table, in the Christian tradition, is a place of abundance where there is enough for all.

The image of a table where everyone belongs is a vital one for this era. In their article, *Another Kind of Poverty*, Nicole Letourneau and Justin Joschko write that social isolation is perpetuating child poverty in Canada. "In this sense, the greatest challenge children face isn't financial poverty, but relational poverty." And, therefore, we provide a team of healthy and loving adults who mentor, encourage, enjoy, and embrace these

girls. We are now in our fifth year with 30 girls in the program who attend three days a week. We have had some bumps along the road but we are still convinced that if we are truly the church of Jesus Christ we need to be working among the most vulnerable in our community.

The program runs from October to June every year on a budget of $30,000. It is licensed with the Ministry of Education, and other communities have approached us about how they can create such a program for the vulnerable members of their own town. We have a number of faithful community partners, an exceptional director, and a compassionate and trained team of volunteers. We have many success stories to celebrate. Jane Thompson, an elder at St. Andrew's and a volunteer will share some of these with you.

Volunteering

by Jane Thompson

As a volunteer with Reaching for Rainbows since its inception four years ago, I have observed the positive development of many of the girls over that time. Here I share some highlights.

Last June, we held our first graduation ceremony for those girls who would be finishing Grade 4 that year. In each of these young ladies, we could see a growth in confidence and compassion. Two of these girls, who had been too shy to speak in front of a group when they first came to Rainbows were not afraid to stand before a crowd of about 40 parents, children, and volunteers that night and lead the singing of the Irish blessing. The barbecue prepared by the volunteers for the families of all the Reaching for Rainbows girls was a sign of our new commitment to welcome each family member to the table, a place where we could truly share in one another's life.

When the girls come to Rainbows, they are given a personal journal in which to record their thoughts. One girl, who has very little exposure to literacy at home, was working diligently in her journal for several weeks by occasionally asking for help

Because we are committed to building an inclusive community, we invite the families to eat with us on a regular basis.

with a word or sentence. Then one day, she offered to read her work to the group. She had created her own fairy tale about a princess seeking true love.

A third girl was encouraged to pursue her gift for drawing and visual art. She would often create pieces to give to her new Reaching for Rainbows friends and the volunteers. A wonderful confidence booster for all the girls was the art project mentored by a local artist. Each girl created a painting, which was framed and exhibited on the walls of the church sanctuary for a month.

One of the neediest girls came into the program in Grade 1 telling volunteers that she was "no good" and that

Reaching for Rainbows art displayed in the sanctuary at St. Andrew's for the month of May. The girls took enormous pride in their contribution.

"everybody hates me." When she tried a new game or skill she would give up very quickly, saying, "I'll never be able to do that." With much patient encouragement, she has learned to work through her failures and mistakes until she succeeded. Having graduated from the program, she is now a member of another youth group where she has been elected by her peers to more than one executive position.

Further evidence of the increasing self-esteem from our girls comes from our sponsor's tea. For the tea gathering each girl chooses to be a greeter or a server. Greeters stand at the entrance and welcome guests with a handshake and a personal greeting. Servers take orders for tea, coffee, or a cold drink, and then serve it with the cupcakes they have baked. We role-play each task before the tea. The girls are very excited for most of them do not have this kind of opportunity in their lives. Each one carried out her duties with enthusiasm and grace. The mother of one of the greeters was delighted that her daughter, who had come to Rainbows reluctant to make eye contact or speak up, could be such a fine greeter.

Conclusion

The goal of Reaching for Rainbows is to bring these little girls out of the poverty and/or behaviour that isolate them and include them in a community of support and encouragement. Many of them do not function well in the classroom but thrive at Rainbows because they are given the opportunity to develop their strengths and are not judged by their weaknesses.

Alistair McLeod in his novel *No Great Mischief* ends with the line, "All of us are better when we are loved." Reaching for Rainbows creates a community of love for vulnerable girls who come from vulnerable families. We include these girls in community meals; we include their art on the

Director Jane Wollenberg is a former Montessori School Principal. The low ratio of adults to children enables her to provide leadership for the volunteers as well as special attention to each child.

'olunteer Elizabeth Etue enjoys a moment of tenderness and fun vith the girls around the snack table. Elizabeth is a wonderful mentor; he played varsity basketball and has written a book about women's ockey. These are the kinds of strong, compassionate women that olunteer.

Photos by Graham Davies and Jane Thompson.

walls of our sanctuary; we engage them as capable members of the wider community when they host teas. Like Jesus, we want to include them at the table of life. At this table, we affirm them, enjoy them, and celebrate with them when they discover their gifts as we all do when surrounded by loving friendships.

For more information or to make a contribution to this program go to www.reachingforrainbows.com.

The Rev Lynne Donovan has served the Circle of Friends at St. Andrew's in Picton for eight years. She has a background in Political Science and is passionate about creating communities where each one thrives. She is the daughter of the Rev. Walter and Gaye Donovan whose vision for ministry was to serve as the hands and heart of Christ in the world.

Jane Thompson is an elder at St. Andrew's. She is a retired teacher and has devoted much of her life to supporting the development of children and youth.

Helping Students to Learn

In the Fall of 2008, we began an exciting new adventure at Halton Hills Christian School (HHCS). We started a program called 'The Arrowsmith Program'. We began to investigate other programs at that time, mainly to assist our own students, who have been part of our Special Resource program. Together with a few parents and staff, we began our journey in researching The Arrowsmith Program and ultimately applied to be one of their licensed satellite sites.

Now, seven years later since its conception in 2008, this program has impacted many of our students and their families, who have struggled with learning disabilities. We have grown from 10 students to 24 students in just a few short years and HHCS is now known to be a local Christian School that offers this program in the Peel and Halton regions.

The Arrowsmith Program is based on the work of Barbara Arrowsmith Young, a Canadian who struggled with her own learning disabilities throughout her school experience. While at graduate school, Young's investigations in the science of neuroplasticity led her to develop exercises that she began doing herself

in the late 1970s to strengthen her own learning capacities.

The results led Young to offer her program through her own school which opened in Toronto. Hundreds of students have been through the program since it opened in 1980. "Now 35 years later, Barbara Arrowsmith Young is a well-known speaker and author and the program has expanded widely in Canada, the United States, and other countries like Australia and Thailand. We are excited and grateful to be a part of it," said Mrs. Vangoor, our school principal.

Why is the program so successful? It is because the Arrowsmith program uses a vastly different approach to dealing with students with learning disabilities. "Currently in the regular school system, we set up accommodating strategies to cope with the learning disability. Scribing stories for students, who have trouble writing or allowing them to type something on the computer instead of writing it, are examples of those strategies. Those strategies don't help overcome the disability, they just work around it," said Vangoor. "The goal of the Arrowsmith Program is to fundamentally change the capacity of the learner to learn."

Students work on a variety of 11 different cognitive exercises. Students are required to do 70 to 100 minutes of homework, 6 times a week. The activities are unique and they definitely challenge the brain! The exercises work the brain as if it is a muscle. The promise is that, as the exercises change the brain's abilities, children begin to learn at the natural rate of their peers; they no longer require remedial support, program modification, or other forms of compensation.

"It is a very intense program and kids really need to be able to focus, but the results are impressive," said Vangoor. "I think people get to the point where they say, 'Now what, we've tried everything?'" "Arrowsmith has shown success where conventional 'work-arounds' fail," said Vangoor.

"It is a privilege to work with students as a coach, a motivator, and a cheerleader. Many students arrive at our door with low self-esteem. It is wonderful to watch them grow in confidence," remarks Mrs. Collier, one of our Arrowsmith teachers.

"One of the best things to hear students say (and believe) about themselves is, "I'm smart." whereas, before Arrowsmith, students felt very

The activities are unique and they definitely challenge the brain! The exercises work the brain as if it is a muscle.

poorly about their own abilities. In the past, traditional schooling wasn't always a positive experience for some students and that filtered into all aspects of their lives. Joining the Arrowsmith program and achieving success has taught students to believe in themselves, to have faith that they can work through challenges and to have hope for the future." said Ms. Takaki, another one of our Arrowsmith teachers.

It is our school's core value that every student matters. We believe that all children are unique gifts of God and deserve the best possible opportunity for learning. We recognize the importance of providing our students with an extraordinary learning environment, regardless of where they are in their learning journey. We seek to create an environment that is best suited to students with learning differences and to assist them in becoming all they can be.

It is also important to us that we invest in our staff so that they can be strong role models for our students. Our staff invests their time and energy in the lives of our students by working collaboratively to lead, to nurture, to serve, and to love our students so they can pursue their dreams that God has planned for them.

We are thankful that God has provided Halton Hills Christian School with the opportunity to offer the Arrowsmith Program in our community . We have been so privileged to be part of such a great program.

If you are interested in learning more The Arrowsmith Program, please visit the Arrowsmith School's website: www.arrowsmithschool.org

Whoever said, "You can't have your cake and eat it too," never heard of Gift Annuities

Gift Annuities are a way you can make a gift to the church to support the ministry of your choice and in return receive a guaranteed annual income for life, the majority or all of the income tax-free. Sound too good to be true? Call the Planned Giving Office today to learn how you can have your cake and eat it too.

What flavour of ministry would you like to support?

A real life example:

In 1994, Giollo Kelly acquired a $10,000 gift annuity which she designated for the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation. When she died fifteen years later, Giollo had received nearly $11,000 (87% tax-free) in total payments and left a legacy of nearly $7,500 with the money remaining in her annuity account.

(The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Annuity rates and the residue available for disbursement vary.)

For a free, no-obligation gift annuity quote, contact

Planned Giving Office
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
1-800-619-7301
plannedgiving@presbyterian.ca

Reflections on Guatemala

by Susan McLennan

"Woman in the house, nurtured to be meek, leave your second place; listen, think and speak! Women on the road, from your sickness freed, witness and provide; joining word and deed."

These words by hymn writer Brian Wren speak directly to the women of Guatemala. Through our support to our partners, we are giving women a voice and directly affecting the future for them and their families.

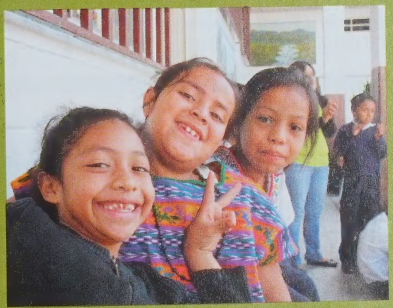
The WMS recently held an eight-day visit to Guatemala where we visited many projects supported through Presbyterians Sharing and Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D). Throughout this trip, we saw the results of our support and we are now able to share the stories of the people we met. We also know that the new WMS Together We Can! project has the ability to change the lives of women, men, and children in Guatemala.

Through International Ministries, The Presbyterian Church in Canada supports our partner CEDEPCA, The Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America, and the Fraternidad of Mayan Presbiteriales. PWS&D supports the Maya-Mam Association for Research and Development (AMMID) for women and men living in the western highlands of the San Marcos region. PWS&D also supports the Francisco Coll School, situated on a landfill site beside the city's dump, and the Fraternidad of Mayan Presbiteriales.

Photo: PWS&D/Paul Jeff

rom the raternidad

Velcome! My name s Carmelita. I have een helped a lot conomically—eople don't think ve need as much upport because ve are close to he larger cities. Because I learned o read and write, nd because I have aken courses, my ommunity now ooks to me for help. am happy that I an help others to liscover their worth nd value also.



One of our visits was to the Francisco Coll School in Guatemala City. Here, we saw sweet children with happy clean faces, and we witnessed enthusiastic singing of songs, traditional dances, and children sharing gifts they had made for our group. The school accepts all children who come. Grade 1-6 students can receive scholarships to continue their education at both public and private schools. We then toured the dump city where these children live where we saw garbage everywhere, narrow alleys, stray dogs, mothers washing clothes by hand and hanging them across open doorways. How is it possible that these joyous little faces come from this environment?

We spent four days in the San Marcos region, high in the mountains with our partners AMMID. The purpose of the AMMID is to empower the women and encourage the communities to diagnose, plan, and implement sustainable growth for the future. They currently work with 35 of 66 communities (which include 955 families) in the areas of agroecology, women's artisan projects, rights and democracy, and integral health. As people are trained, they become promoters and then go out and teach others.

We spent one daywith women in a community who have received training from the AMMID in farming, women's rights, and health. There were over two dozen people present while the women talked and shared their stories. The women were all Maya and because they spoke the Mam language, we had a translation from Mam to Spanish and from Spanish to English. Here is one woman's story:

> My name is Valentina. When I was first asked to be president of my group I was afraid. I had never spoken in front of any group outside my own community. But because no one else would accept, I took the challenge to be president. After attending many workshops, I learned a new and better way of farming. Life is much better. I never tire now of teaching others and telling everyone I meet. I have learned to respect myself and know that I have a purpose in the world.

Hello and welcome. My name is Aurelia. I was born in this community and I am a former president of this group. Life is very hard in this community. It was very difficult for me to become president because my husband did not give me permission. My largest obstacle on this journey has been my husband. Little by little my husband began to understand and I gained courage to

attend the workshops. I have learned to grow onions, carrots, and herbs and also better ways to cook them. My husband has begun to support my learning because he can see the benefit to our family. I have shared my experiences with my co-workers and friends. We are very grateful for how our lives have changed. Now, my husband insists that I attend all new workshops and training sessions. Now, as soon as I come home he asks, "What did you learn today?" I wish all communities could learn and improve their lives as well.

The women were so anxious to tell their stories and to share their experiences with us. They told us. "We have nothing to give you, but thank you for coming and we thank God for your visit." They were also curious and wanted to know what we did for a living and where we came from. In our group, we had two retired teachers, two retired nurses, two who worked in business, two farmers, and a gardener—those were all professions they could understand and relate to and brought many smiles to their faces. They were gracious women, sharing their stories.

We visited Caserio El Eden Elementary School. Once again, we were treated to children dancing and music, and a very active young school population who were extremely excited to have visitors! The teachers and students have started a school

Photos for this article have been provided by Karen Bokma, PWS&D, Diane Kemp, and Ruth Pollock

My name is Brenda, I am a promoter for our group and I wanted to thank you for coming as well. My life has been difficult, too. For many years, I did not see a meaning in my life. My father-in-law abused me and my ex-husband left me. I had to fight for food for my children. Lettie (from the AMMID) taught me that I did not have to take abuse and that I should have respect for myself. My life and that of my children have improved because of the help I have received. Thank you for your support and for listening to my story.

garden and they demonstrated for us their techniques for hoeing, making rows, and planting radishes.

On our final afternoon with the AMMID staff, we were presented with a lovely painting which states in Spanish, "Thank you for your visit, friendship, and valuable support to our communities," and in Mam "Thank you!" We were also each presented with a shawl in the traditional Mayan colours: yellow for seeds and hope; red for energy and the blood which runs through our veins; green for nature and mother earth; and black for rest.

It was quite amazing for us to notice the similarities in the understanding and traditions between the Maya-Mam people and our First Nations here in Canada.

The WMS group thanked the AMMID for all the work they did hosting us and arranging the visits to farms and the school. It is obvious that God has called them to this important work, and the visits exceeded our expectations. The testimonies the women shared show how the work of the AMMID has empowered them and given them hope.

On Tuesday, we moved back down the mountain to Quetzaltenango to visit the Fraternidad de Mayan Presbiteriales. The Fraternidad has been working with marginalized women for nearly three decades. They work to empower rural women, strengthen education for women in theology, the environment, farming, health and nutrition, and artisanal training. They are like the WMS in their structure and organization.

Again, the women of the Fraternidad were eager to share their stories. When expressing thanks to the women of the Fraternidad, I promised that we would share their stories and their continuing journey with other women. By strengthening their abilities and increasing their knowledge, they are improving the future for their children and families. When women are strong, communities are strong.

On Wednesday, we travelled to Antigua Guatemala for our debriefing session led by Emerson, the Cultural Encounters liaison with CEDEPCA. Emerson thanked us for walking with

the people of Guatemala on their journey. He quoted author Maya Angelou who said:

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou also said: "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." After meeting the Mayan women who were so anxious to share their stories with us, I have to believe that is true.

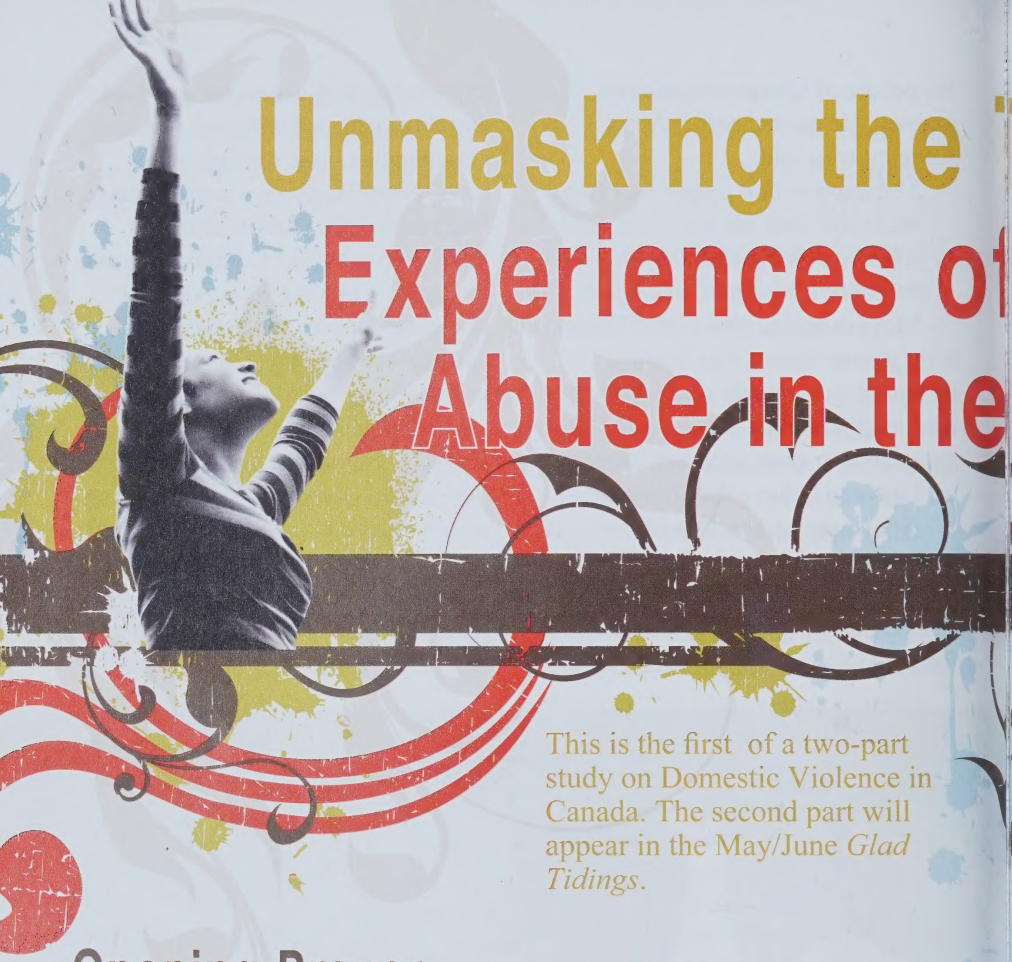
After a wonderful tour of the historic city of Antigua Guatemala, a UNESCO World Heritage site, an amazing lunch with one of Shirley's former kindergarten students, and a day of shopping, we ended our final day by sharing a devotional and communion on the rooftop of our hotel. Betty taught us a song, Gracias, Muchos Gracias, followed by a litany from the Iona Community read by Susan. Communion was led by Betty and Susan. We finished with a closing blessing and singing, Go Now in Peace.

In conclusion, the trip was amazing, educational, emotional, and fun—and the work we are supporting is important and useful.

Please consider supporting the Together We Can! project and remember the women of Guatemala and their families in your prayers.

My name is Rosa. I started my first theology course in 2003. It was called, "Conversations with the Bible." My husband did not support my attending these classes, but I continued and graduated with my diploma. Because I have suffered—my parents did not want me because I was a girl—I can understand the suffering of others. My four girls graduated from school because I learned to support us with the sale of my crafts. One of my dreams is to have a greenhouse so that I can grow vegetables all year round.

Unmasking the Experiences of Abuse in the



This is the first of a two-part study on Domestic Violence in Canada. The second part will appear in the May/June *Glad Tidings*.

Opening Prayer

Loving, gentle, compassionate God, be with us as we gather to study and open ourselves to new learning. Help us to be sensitive to one another and good listeners as we venture into a topic that may be difficult or uncomfortable for some. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Is this relevant?

Can you imagine what it must be like for a woman to be deeply hurt by the man she once loved and thought of as a life-long partner? I have been working as a counsellor, supporting women who have experienced abuse for almost 20 years. I have learned many things over those years as I have listened to women's stories

uth: The Women's Violence and Home

by Karen McAndless-Davis

of suffering and betrayal. I have learned that abuse can happen to any woman from any walk of life. I have learned that abuse from an intimate partner has a long-term and devastating impact on the lives of women. I have also learned that a little kindness and compassion can mean a world of difference for a woman, who is feeling trapped and alone in an abusive situation. I hope this two-part study will help you respond to women experiencing abuse with compassion and sensitivity.

Bible Study

Let's read about how distraught King David was when he was betrayed by someone he trusted and loved. Psalm 55 gives us a glimpse into that type of betrayal. Read Psalm 55:12–14, 20–22.

67% of all Canadians say they personally know at least one woman who has been sexually or physically assulted.

~Angus Reid Omnibus Survey, Canadian Women's Foundation, 20

Many Christian women who experience abuse find comfort in this Psalm. It powerfully names the sort of pain they are experiencing. The Psalm writer, David, writes in a time of great distress. His close friend, his companion betrays him and becomes like an enemy to him.[i] David speaks about his companion's words being smooth like butter and softer than oil while his heart is set on destruction. This powerfully describes the type of hypocrisy many women experience with their abusive partners. Abusive men can "talk the talk" when it serves them, but their behaviour betrays another reality, which causes massive devastation in women's lives.

Discussion:

- The betrayal David experiences throws him into a pit of despair. Have you ever felt betrayed by someone who was close to you?
- If you have not had that experience, can you empathize with someone who has?
- Can you imagine how it might feel to have your husband, the person who is supposed to care about you more than anyone else, actually behave like your worst enemy—scheming for your destruction?

Surprising Statistics:

One in three Canadian women experience physical abuse from a partner or spouse in their lifetime.[ii] The statistic is the same for both Christian and non-Christian homes.[iii] While we might like to think that violence or abuse just happens to certain women (uneducated women, weak women, minority women,

poor women), the reality is that abuse can happen to any woman. I know this first hand because it happened to me. It is my personal experience with this issue that has brought me to this work. I come from a loving Christian home. My parents still attend the Presbyterian church I grew up in. When I was experiencing violence and abuse from my husband, I was serving as a minister in a congregation in Surrey BC.[iv] If it can happen to me, it can happen to anyone. It can happen to your daughter or grand-daughter. It can happen to your friend or co-worker. Maybe it has even happened to you.

The focus of this study is women's experiences of violence or abuse in intimate relationships. We know that abuse can take many forms. We know, sadly, that children are abused and elders are abused and sometimes bosses abuse workers. We also know that sometimes women abuse their male partners.[v] In focusing on the abuse of women in intimate relationships, we do not intend to deny or negate that these other forms of abuse are happening. Rather, we simply want to acknowledge that a shocking number of women experience violence from their intimate partners (1 in 3) and that this deserves our attention.

Think about this, one in nine Canadian women will have breast cancer in their life time. Now think about all the ways we bring awareness to breast cancer. We "run for the cure," encourage our loved ones to get mammograms, and buy facial tissue with pink ribbons on it. Now, remembering that one in three Canadian women experience violence from an intimate partner, ask yourself what we do to raise

"Violence against women happens in all cultures and religions, in all ethnic and racial communities, at every age, and in every income group."

Canadianwomen.org

awareness about this issue. In my experience, we live as if this is a non-issue. But I think change is possible. When I was a kid, we never talked about breast cancer out loud. It was something we whispered about. Now we talk about it out loud and we are all the better for it. I believe this is also an issue we can bring to light, learn more about, and become better supporters of women who have experienced abuse.

What do we mean by abuse?

For starters, we need to clarify what we mean by abuse. Abuse is not an isolated action, but rather a pattern of behaviour intended to control, coerce, and manipulate another. The motive with abuse is always to have power over the other person. We will learn more about the pattern of abuse below.

Are there different types of abuse?

There are many different types of abuse. They all have a devastating impact on women. Here is a list of common types of abuse women experience from their partners:

Emotional or verbal abuse: Making humiliating or degrading comments about her body or behaviour, calling her names, destroying her possessions, threatening to kill her (or to kill the children, other family members or pets), threatening to commit suicide.

Social abuse: Isolating her from family and friends, sabotaging her efforts to work or go to school, lying to others about her.

Micah 4: 1–4, The Message

But when all is said and done, GOD's Temple on the mountain,
Firmly fixed, will dominate all mountains, towering above surrounding hills.
People will stream to it and many nations set out for it,
Saying, "Come, let's climb GOD's mountain. Let's go to the Temple of Jacob's God.
He will teach us how to live. We'll know how to live God's way."
True teaching will issue from Zion, GOD's revelation from Jerusalem.
He'll establish justice in the rabble of nations and settle disputes in faraway places.
They'll trade in their swords for shovels, their spears for rakes and hoes.
Nations will quit fighting each other, quit learning how to kill one another.
Each man will sit under his own shade tree, each woman in safety will tend her own garden.
GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies says so, and he means what he says.

Financial abuse: Controlling all the money, creating debt, hiding money from her, forcing her to work, denying her the right to work.

Spiritual abuse: Using her religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate, and control her, and/or isolating her from her faith community.

Physical abuse: Slapping, hitting, choking, or punching her, threatening to hurt her, using intimidating body language, driving recklessly with her in the car.

Sexual abuse: Coercing her into unwanted sexual acts, using pornography, having an affair or threatening to have an affair, rape.

Criminal harassment/stalking: Following her or watching her in a persistent, malicious, and unwanted manner, invading her privacy in a way that threatens her personal safety, harassing her with texts and emails.

This is certainly not an exhaustive list. For a more complete list, see: http://www.whenlovehurts.ca/articles/many-types-of-abuse/

Discussion:

- What surprises you about all this information?
- Before this study, were you aware of all these different types of abuse?
- Which types would you find the most difficult to experience personally?

How does society generally define abuse?

Our society seems to recognize only physical abuse as serious, but this is not the only kind in a women's abusive experiences. I have supported hundreds of women. Some of the women I have supported have been stabbed, choked, or had their bones broken. None of those women have said the physical abuse they suffered was the worst of the abuse. They pointed to verbal, emotional, or psychological abuse as more hurtful and as having a longer lasting impact. As one woman said, "A bruise will heal up in a few days. Being told I am stupid every day for 10 years is going to be harder to heal from." Other women point to financial abuse or social abuse as having the greatest negative impact on their lives. If a woman loses contact with all her friends and family, she is very vulnerable. If a woman has no access to money, she is trapped with no options. It is interesting to notice that women consistently report that physical abuse is not the worst type of abuse but society continues to act as if it is. There is a disconnect here between women's experiences and society's ideas.

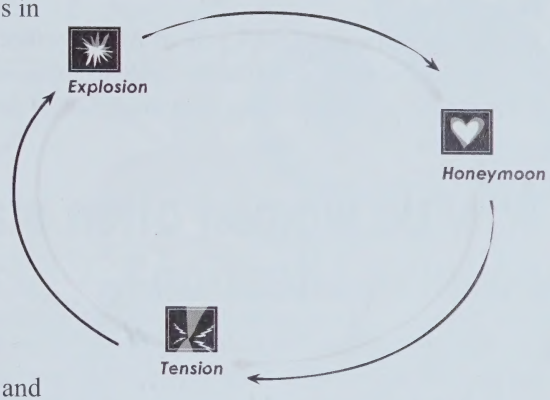
Discussion:

- Do you have any ideas about why this disconnect exists?

Does abuse have a pattern?

Yes, abuse has a pattern. The pattern is called the Cycle of Abuse.[vi]

Abusive men present themselves in the beginning in a very positive way. They do what is called *Honeymoon* behaviour. It is honeymoon behaviour that attracts the woman and draws her in to the relationship. The man will be warm, attentive, and kind. He will be interested in the same things the woman is interested in. The two of them will do fun and enjoyable things together. He may give her gifts or make promises. This behaviour makes the woman interested in the man and invested in the relationship. But the honeymoon behaviour does not last and it eventually deteriorates into tension building.



The *Tension Building* phase of the cycle varies in length. Some abusive men may be moody, sarcastic, or critical for a period of minutes, hours, weeks, or months, creating unbearable tension in the relationship. Some men withdraw from the relationship, appearing sullen and disinterested. They may blame their behaviour on work stress, their wife, or their children. This phase is characterized by a lot of fear, as women worry about what will come next. Sometimes women feel that they are walking on eggshells or stepping through a land mine and trying to avoid the next explosion.

He then moves on to the *Explosion* part of the cycle. The first few experiences of explosion may not seem that significant, but they are still distressing. Examples of explosive behaviour are name calling, swearing, yelling, throwing things, banging pots, or slamming doors. Some abusive men also employ the "silent treatment" during the explosion—not speaking to their partners for days, weeks, or months. Typically, this part of the cycle becomes more dangerous and frequent over time.

After the explosion, the abusive man usually returns to the honeymoon phase of the cycle. He stops the more negative and dangerous-looking behaviour he used during the tension building and explosion phases and behaves in seemingly positive or neutral ways again. The abusive partner may offer apologies and promise not to act that way again, or he may simply resume behaving in a way that is more acceptable.

Discussion:

- Have you heard of the Cycle of Abuse before?
- How would you describe the cycle to someone else?
- How do you think living with the Cycle of Abuse might begin to affect a woman?

Why do women often stay in an abusive situation?

It is the honeymoon phase of the cycle that traps women in abuse. Abusive men present themselves very well in the beginning. It is this good looking behaviour that the woman chooses. It is what she comes to think of as "the real him." Usually the woman does not see a lot of the tension building or explosion behaviour until she is committed to the point that it is no longer easy to get out of the relationship: she is engaged, married, living together, or pregnant. For 40% of women who experience physical abuse in their relationship, the physical abuse begins when she is pregnant.[vii] It is extremely hard to walk away from a relationship you thought would last a life time. If there is a child in common, it becomes excruciatingly difficult.

Women stay as long as they do for many, many reasons. We will look at some additional reasons in the next study, but the honeymoon phase of the cycle answers, in part, why women stay with abusive men. The more positive looking behaviour keeps coming around. Abusive men are not always mean and hurtful. Sometimes they appear to be generous and thoughtful. The honeymoon feels completely authentic. And the honeymoon may become more powerful if he fears she may leave him. For example, after a huge explosion, if she says she wants some time apart, he may suggest they go for marriage counselling. If the woman has been asking for marriage counselling for years, this honeymoon behaviour will feel very hopeful and she will likely reinvest in the relationship

It is important to realize that, for the most part, everyone else only sees the honeymoon behaviour from the abusive man. This is the behaviour he will show to family members, church members, clergy, counsellors, social workers, and judges. It is typical that everyone else will think "he is a great guy." Abusive men do not present themselves in society as monsters. They are perfectly capable of presenting themselves in very positive ways. This is one thing that isolates women and sometimes makes women wonder if they are going "crazy" because he acts so well in front of everyone else.[viii]

"Education is a tangible solution for so much violence towards women, both physical and psychological" ~Emily Huxman, a junior at Bluffton University

The fact that he behaves well when it suits his purposes helps us to see clearly that his behaviour is a choice. Sometimes people wrongly think that abusive men "lose control" when they behave badly, but actually they are doing what they are doing to gain control. They are trying to threaten or scare their partners into submission. When they honeymoon their partners, they are choosing to behave well in order to win their partners over. It is all about them and their desire to have power and control over their partners.

A woman who is experiencing abuse often feels isolated and frightened. Who could she talk to about broken furniture or holes in the wall? Who would believe her? Who would understand that she is not ready to leave the relationship because she needs to gather more information, see if he will change, think about the kids, etc.? Who would understand that she both loves him and hates his behaviour at the same time? Who would understand that she is both afraid to stay and afraid to leave? [ix]

Discussion:

- Let's return to our last question: Why do women stay so long? What new insights have you gained?
- How can we support a woman who divulges her painful situation to us?

In my experience, a woman who is experiencing abuse has very few options. She may not have money to leave. He may be threatening to get custody of the kids

if she leaves. He has perhaps convinced everyone that she is "crazy." If I think there is an easy solution for a woman, I have learned to say to myself, "I need to hear more of the story." As I hear more of the story, the complexity becomes clearer. He has trapped her in one way or another. It is interesting and sad that often when women get up the courage to tell someone what is happening, they are often met with people offering seemingly easy solutions. "You should just leave." Or, "You should work harder on your relationship." "You should understand that he is hurt, too." Women experience a lot of *shoulds*!

I really try not to use "should" on women. I assume that each woman is the expert on her own life. I also assume that she knows more about her partner and children than anyone else. I never want to set myself up as the expert on her life and tell her what she should do. If I do that, I am just behaving like her abusive partner

It can also be dangerous to give advice to women in these situations. One woman I supported was advised by her counsellor to destroy an offensive object her partner had brought in to the home. When I spoke to the woman, she was very distressed because she wanted to be a good client and do what her counsellor said but she was afraid to destroy the object. It was not safe to do that. "He would kill me if I did that," she said to me. Women's safety always has to be the number one concern—not just physical safety but also emotional safety, too. A woman is always in the best position to decide what is safest for her.

We will learn more in the next study in this series about ways that we can support and assist women impacted by abuse. But the single most important thing you can do is just listen and care. It is okay that you do not know what do to. You can even say that, "I don't know what to do but I care about you and I

want to support you whatever you do." Women tell me all the time that this sort of agenda free support is very powerful.

Discussion:

- What are some things you will NOT do if a woman confides abuse to you?
- What can you do to help?

What is David's source of help?

Look again at the end of Psalm 55. Notice that David ends it with some encouraging words, "Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved."

Discussion:

- In times of betrayal, have you experienced Gods sustaining presence? If so, how did you experience this?
- How can you share this with another person in an encouraging way?

Closing Prayer:

Loving God, on this day and this night there are women living in fear, feeling unsafe in their homes. May your protective love enfold them and carry them through these dark days. May your light outshine any despair or doubt they may be feeling. Bring strength and courage to them as they seek to find greater safety for themselves and their children. Help them to find people and resources that will support them and help them. We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace, your Son, Jesus. Amen.

---

[i] David's enemy may have been his son Absalom, or his counsellor Ahithophel.

[ii] Statistics Canada 1993. (This is an old study but it is the only study of its type ever conducted in Canada.)

[iii] Catherine Clark Kroeger and Nancy Nason-Clark, *No Place for Abuse: Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence* (InterVarsity Press, 2001), pp. 20.

[iv] If you want to read more about my story, you can find it on my website: http://www.whenlovehurts.ca/?s=our+story

[v] Most men are not abusive in their homes. However, when family violence does occur, the victims are overwhelmingly female: 83% of all police-reported domestic assaults are against women. (Canadian Women's Foundation website.)

[vi] Lenore E. Walker, *The Battered Woman* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1979), pp.55ff.

[vii] 40% pregnant

[viii] Occasionally abusive men will behave poorly in front of others but this is not the norm.

[ix] The most dangerous time for a woman is when she tries to leave.

WMS ... Did you Know?

by Colleen Wood

The Council Executive of The Women's Missionary Society met from November 11–12 in Toronto. We began our meeting with a special devotional for Remembrance Day. Joy Randall reminded us of the costly love demonstrated by Jesus giving his life for us, and that we are to mirror this great love.

In terms of business, much was accomplished and there were many updates. Susan McLennan updated us on her term as president, to date. She has attended four gatherings since starting her term as president. Her term began at the WMS Annual Council meeting, and this was followed by the General Assembly in June in Vancouver. The theme at Council, Seizing the Hope, transitioned well into the theme of the assembly, Imagining the Kingdom, where she found different ways of seizing the hope to move forward in our denomination and the world.

Later in June, she attended The Presbyterian Church USA Women's Gathering. Finally, in October, she visited Guatemala. She saw first-hand the important work that the PWS&D, PCC, and WMS are doing in Guatemala, such as supporting food security, women's empowerment, and the education of children.

Sarah Kim and Alexis McKeown updated us on the work of Presbyterian Women, the outreach wing of the WMS. The focus of this outreach will be serving, sharing, and spiritual living. We will build relationships, provide resources, and encourage women in their service to God. Plans are already underway for the next Presbyterian Women's Gathering in 2017 with the theme, Rooted in Love (Ephesians 3:16-21). Also, Council Executive approved that this work will now be called, Women to Women (WTW), and that the new online community will be called The Hub. The Hub will be launched in January, and will be a blog to share our reformed faith and build relationships.

The Editorial/Program Committee announced that the Rev. Lara Scholey, minister at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Scottsburn, Nova Scotia, and Convenor of the PWS&D committee is the writer for Mission Awareness Sunday. They also had extensive discussions regarding the report forms that are sent to groups. In the end, they decided that the information on the report forms will now be collected by email for the national office, and both synodicals and presbyterials can collect only the information that they need.

The Personnel Committee expressed thanks to all the staff for their hard work and for taking on

so much. It was also noted that Elza Furzer, who has been our part-time financial staff person will be leaving to once again 'retire'.

The Finance Committee noted a number of items that we have recently supported, including the Mendha community in India for a bore well. In India, we have also aided 18 students at the Isabel McConnell School of Nursing. We also made a decision to sponsor the Tumekutana event in Africa, which brings women together to support, learn from, and encourage one another. Our Together We Can! projects continue, and to date we have raised almost $4000 for the Maya-Mam women of Guatemala and close to $5000 for the ARISE ministry in East Toronto.

In synodical reports, there were a few things to note. First, congratulations to the Synodical of British Columbia for producing the book, Journey to the Western Sea, about the 100-years of history, and winning 1st prize for this book from The History Committee of General Assembly. This synodical is also trying to connect more by email. Southwestern Ontario Synodical is finding that members often like to share their work now, and that co-presidents are becoming common. Central and Northeastern Ontario Synodical has been doing a lot of work in trying to reduce positions, and making things simpler. Quebec and Eastern Ontario Synodical has had good attendance at their two meetings this past year, and certainly email communication contributed to this.

During our time, we also enjoyed two special presentations. Susan McLennan, Shirley Miller, and

Shirley Miller, Karen Bokma, and Susan McLennan

Karen Bokma (from PWS&D) spoke about their recent trip to Guatemala. They saw how past funding for these projects have improved the lives of the women and families in Guatemala, and they are excited about how our Together We Can! Project can continue to make a difference. Women are now able to grow better crops, cook more nutritious food, and begin small businesses. They are able to send their children to school. They feel empowered and want to share their stories.

Our second presentation was on the recent trip to Africa by Sarah Kim and Janet Brewer. Sarah began by saying she had always found her trips to Africa educational and fruitful, but this one was especially profound as she experienced meeting women from over 22 countries of Africa in one place. Sarah and Janet participated in Tumekutana 2015 with the theme, From Slavery to Freedom—Empowering Women. There is a strong feeling that women and children are still enslaved in much of Africa.

Both Janet and Sarah saw how much these women can teach us. Even in their oppression, they pray. They have a strong life of faith and present such joy-filled praise. In their struggles, they continue to seek God and live a life of thanksgiving. But, they also need our help, so they can help themselves. Our African sisters face so many challenges, but we can help by walking with them in solidarity. The event came up with a statement to encourage one another as they continue to move forward:

"We call on Tumekutana women to act as agents of transformation by standing up against harmful cultural practices. By God's Grace and our own efforts, Tumekutana 2015 doesn't stop here and today—this is where it starts!"

Circulation News

by Colleen Wood

Welcome to a new subscription year!

Please double check that your address is correct on your mailing label. If there are any corrections to be made, please contact us at gladtidings@presbyterian.ca, or call 1-800-619-7301 (416-441-1111). Also, if you are the *Glad Tidings* contact for your group, please check in with any new subscribers to be certain they received their magazine.

Finally a reminder, new subscribers are welcome anytime! Please, continue to promote the magazine by passing it along to others. Consider giving gift subscriptions as well.

Amy Zavitz
Malawi
So What Exactly are you Doing There?

Finally, I have the answer! I have finished my first full week of work and I think I am going to love this job! I have now learned that I am mostly going to be working in the Monitoring and Evaluation Department of LISAP (Livingstonia Synod AIDS Programme).

After a project has been implemented, it needs to be evaluated to determine the effectiveness, identify the challenges, and make recommendations for the continuation of the project. Depending on the size of the project, this can be done internally—and that's where I come in!

Last week, we were evaluating the implementation of self-help groups within villages in northern Malawi. Groups of women are trained for five days on group savings and loans, entrepreneurship, and eventually agricultural and advocacy skills. They then establish a group fund where each member contributes a small amount weekly. This creates a loan fund where the women can borrow money to begin small businesses. These groups have only been in action for a couple of months so there isn't any massive change yet, but it was really wonderful to hear stories from women, who have seen a positive impact in their lives, such as feeling economically empowered or secure in food supplies, because of these groups. And by "hear stories" I mean that these stories have been translated for me.

Have I mentioned that I don't pick up languages very well? Unfortunately for me, most of the people in the villages do not speak English and my Tumbuka knowledge ends at greeting someone and saying 'thank you'—so then I stand, nod, and smile. Luckily my coworker translates everything the women say during our focus groups. Now that I'm back in the office, I've been writing the evaluation report and started developing the tools for our next focus group. I can't wait to continue with this job!

And just to top it off—I had an amazing view from the lodge we were staying at for our field work. I think I'm going to like it here.

Amy Zavitz serves as a Young Adult Intern in Malawi with our longstanding partner, The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in the Synod of Livingstonia. This article is reprinted from her blog: http://pccweb.ca/missionblog/amy-zavtiz/

Joel and Rebecca Sherbino, Malawi
Getting Settled…

Well, we are six weeks into our year-long African adventure. The time has flown by already!

We already feel very settled into life here, having lived here for three years before, because not too much has changed. The kids have adjusted amazingly well. Within a day of being here, Isaac had ventured outside our gate and had met six Malawian children from the nearby houses.

Canaan and Masika hesitantly followed, and soon after, they had taken out our soccer ball and hockey sticks and were all having a blast playing together. I've been truly astounded with how resilient the kids have been and how well they have adapted to new circumstances, new friends, and many new cultural expectations. As an adult, I have been challenged to be as open, trusting, and unselfconscious as they are in meeting new people!

The first week of school was tough on all of them, but in only one month they have all made a few friends and are feeling fairly comfortable at school. All three of them have made the 'swim squad' and they swim several times a week. Isaac has also made the field hockey team—we are trying to keep at least some element of hockey alive while we are outside of Canada!

Joel and I are immensely enjoying being back in the warm weather.

We were very, very thankful that someone lent us a vehicle the first day we arrived and needed it back the day before we were able to purchase a vehicle for the year. Thank you to those who were praying for a temporary vehicle for us, as that has made our first days much easier. Buying a car in Malawi as a foreigner is a long, complicated process, so we are really glad to have sorted that out.

Bec has started working with development projects that are funded through Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D). They are currently in partnership with an all-girls Secondary School, an HIV/AIDS project, and the Tidzalerana Club. Tidzalerana (which means working together) provides a weekly drop-in for people with disabilities, and also has a small shelter for people with disabilities that have no one to care for them. The weekly club provides a healthy snack (usually roasted peanuts, bread, and butter), physiotherapy support for moms with young children with disabilities, and essential supplies like soap and

A verse that I have been taking to heart these days is this one:

"If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tight-fisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need." Deuteronomy 5:17–18

assistance with medicines to some of the most vulnerable people in Malawi. With no social security system, these individuals (women and children especially) are often left destitute and alone.

Last year, there were devastating floods in Malawi that destroyed hundreds of homes. PWS&D is currently funding the reconstruction of 17 homes for members of the club. My role involves reporting on the work that is already underway and supporting the Malawian staff who are already on the ground.

Joel is getting involved in the work of Kachere CCAP (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian), located in Ndirande, a 5-minute drive from where we live. Ndirande is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Blantyre, but the church is very vibrant and intentional about reaching out in their community. Joel is responsible for the teaching at the English service, which starts at 6 a.m. (yes, that is not a typo). He also preaches on occasion at the Chichewa service—with the aid of a translator. Some folks in the church believe he will be preaching fluently in Chichewa by the end of the year. Joel has told them that they had better begin praying for a miracle. He is also getting involved in other ministries of the church as well as assisting the Chaplain in the prison.

Joel and I continue to work through how best to help and support people in our short time here. It is humbling to see how much we have in relation to others. We are struggling to learn how to be more generous with what God has given us. We are thankful for your prayers and support for our family and for our ministry partnership here. I'm sure much of the reason that our transition has been so smooth is because of all the prayers.

Our family tries to pray specifically for different people/families each night at dinner and we love to pray for people back home too.

Syndocial

The **Synodical of Quebec and Eastern Ontario** met at St. Paul's in Kemptville on September 14. Irene Nesbitt constituted the meeting and Judy Messenger brought the welcome from St. Paul's. The worship service theme was, Seize the Hope. Ruth Davidson read Hebrews 6:13–20 and Titus 2:11–15, while Irene Nesbitt led the devotional.

The morning speaker, Patricia Grainger, spoke about her trip to Malawi in 2013. They were given a joyous welcome by women singing a cappella and dancing. The group visited Livingstonia Synod and because it was a mission trip, the people were allowed to bring extra suitcases which they filled with school and sport supplies for the children. CCAP (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian) is organized around the Synod; they are responsible for faith, education, health, and social services.

The schools are very basic. The children get a meal which is usually supplied by volunteers. The meal is a dish called ensema, which is made up of maize flour mixed with water. The students are taught basic subjects, such as math, reading, life skills, and sometimes music. In 2000, 21 schools in Canada raised funds to build a school known as the Neno Girls' Secondary School. There are 280 girls in residence. Now the group is trying to raise funds to build a dining hall.

Health conditions, such as pre- and post-natal care, are being stressed. Breast feeding is encouraged and childcare is being taught to both men and women. Livelihood programs are also taught. Women are learning the basics of bookkeeping and accounting. The boys are being taught woodcarving and brickmaking. Patricia asked that we contribute funds to purchase Bibles in Chichewa which cost about $10 each. They have a saying, "God is good all the time. All the time, God is good." This is their mantra.

Joan Hilliard thanked Patricia for her enlightening talk and we enjoyed two solos from Gail Butler. Following grace, we gathered for a lovely ham lunch.

In the afternoon, we joined the Brockville Presbyterial for their meeting. Dr. Paul and Mary Beth McLean shared their work on Bible translation in Taiwan to a captive audience.

The **Central Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda Synodical** held their executive meeting on November 7 at Trinity Presbyterian Church on Bayview in East Toronto. The meeting was well attended, and wise decisions were reached concerning finances and the annual

meeting. One cost-cutting procedure was the agreement to do more business by email, thereby eliminating the cost of printing and mailing. Meeting agendas and annual reports will no longer be printed.

Tori Smit, Regional Staff person, set up a lending library that will contain Vacation Bible School kits, and other material. Some WMS groups are trying to reduce their work load, and in so doing are developing a brief, one-page form, which includes attendance and will replace hand written minutes. Samples of innovative ways are being collected and will be circulated.

For the second year in a row, the Synodical and the Synod meetings were combined. Each group met separately in the morning to conduct the business portion of their meeting. There was also a workshop for others who were attending to hear the guest speaker, but not to be involved in either the Synod or Synodical meetings. After lunch together, the groups united for a guest speaker, followed by two workshops, and ended with a joint worship service and communion.

This new one-day format for the meeting worked well, and was less costly, and most importantly, generated excitement and enthusiasm for the work of the church.

Presbyterial

Huron Perth Women's Presbyterial held their Fall Rally on October 26 at Harrington Presbyterian Church with the theme, He's Got the Whole World in His Hands. Prayer opened the rally, followed by welcome by the host minister, the Rev. Dr. Terry Hastings. The WMS purpose was recited in unison followed by the Goderich women leading the worship on Thanksgiving. The morning speaker, Bessie Hounsell, spoke and showed pictures of her trip to Israel.

Jean Aitcheson talked about her upcoming trips and the supplies that are needed. The afternoon speaker, the Rev. Gwen Ament from St. Marys, made the presention on Global Music. President Mary Duffin then informed us of upcoming events to be marked on our calendars. We then sang, Let There be Light, and closed the meeting in prayer.

Picture a drive through the Ontario countryside on a crisp autumn day, a warm welcome with delicious soup and muffins, and a time of fellowship and learning. It all adds up to a rewarding and well-attended Fall Rally of the **Waterloo-Wellington Presbyterial** at Knox Presbyterian Church in Conn on October 19.

Following a time of welcome and devotions, we were eager to hear the guest speaker, Gladys Abboud, who recently immigrated to Canada from Lebanon with her husband and 2-year-old son, and who has settled in Kitchener. Ms. Abboud, a graduate of the Near East School of Theology, Lebanon, provided a clear

history and review of the present situation in Syria and Lebanon, and how the violence has increased over the years as more outside groups have become involved in the conflict, forcing millions of people to become refugees in many other countries, including Canada. She quoted an apt African proverb, "When elephants fight, the grass is crushed" to illustrate what has happened in her homeland. Because of the lure of profits from natural resources such as oil and gas, the people of Syria and Lebanon are suffering the tragic consequences.

Half of the offering from the rally will go towards a Waterloo-Wellington Presbytery fund for congregations, who are sponsoring refugee families from Lebanon and Syria, and half will go towards the cost of sending knitted pneumonia prevention vests to India, a long-term project of the Waterloo-Wellington Presbyterial.

Maitland Presbyterial Fall Rally was held on October 5 at Knox Presbyterian Church in Kincardine, with the theme, Into the Harvest.

The Rev. Kathy Fraser brought greetings and welcomed everybody after the Kincardine WMS shared a delicious assortment of desserts. Judy Watt and Miriam Barrie led some inspirational singing around the Thanksgiving theme. Co-president Betty Johnston constituted the meeting and led in prayer. Marilyn MacIntrye, Margaret Hamilton, and Kathy Howald from South Kinloss led the worship service about what grows in the garden of our life. Shelly Barger of Lucknow thanked the ladies for sending her to Camp Kintail this summer. She described all the things she enjoyed about the experience and appreciated this opportunity given to her by Maitland Presbyterial.

After three women from Kincardine sang, Fill my Cup, Lord, Carol Shiell introduced our guest speaker, Diane Eaton of Paisley, who presented an inspirational meditation on the theme of Into His Harvest. Using famous artists' harvest paintings, she illustrated various thoughts about how we can be involved in God's harvest of people's lives. Using the illustration of a jar to be filled, we can be filled with Gods Holy Spirit. Diane volunteers with Safe and Sound, a charity for homeless people in Owen Sound. They built a pop-up store by moving the walls and making an assortment of clothing and food available for anyone who wants it. Mae Raynard thanked Diane for her thoughts. Mary Simmons expressed appreciation for everyone who contributed to the evening and Erlma Haldenby closed in prayer.

The **Lanark-Renfrew WMS Presbyterial** Fall Meeting was held in Almonte Presbyterian Church in October. The theme was, Count your Blessings.

President Mary-Lynn

McConnachie greeted the ladies and the meeting was constituted with prayer and the WMS Purpose. Betty Hardie, Almonte WMS president, welcomed everyone.

Margaret Sams shared the history of the Presbyterian Church in Almonte and Beverly Blais sang Count your many Blessings, accompanied by George Stewart on the organ. Irene Nesbitt then gave the synodical report.

Mary-Lynn then gave the devotion: A Tisket, A Tasket, God has Filled my Blessing Basket. Mary-Lynn had the letters P-R-A-I-S-E on cards and read, with related Bible verses, what the letters stand for. P is for powerful, R is righteousness, A is able, I is infinite, S is strength, and E is everlasting. Each person was given a thanksgiving sheet and asked to search through the scriptures to find different ways to thank God. We then sang, Praise Him, Praise Him, Our Blessed Redeemer.

During the lunch hour, the ladies checked out the Ghana Market. There were cloth items, fabrics, wooden carvings, gold jewelry, interesting animals, and other numerous objects to browse and buy.

The speaker, Carole Tanney from World Hope Canada, wore a beautiful dress of purple and gold fabric with elaborate embroidery. She showed a power-point presentation on, Life of a Woman in Ghana. Carole described Ghanaian weddings, schools, and funerals to the crowd.

The day's meeting closed in prayer by Mary-Lynn McConnachie.

~Vivian Young

Local

Hazel McCreath reached her 100th birthday on September 29. An active member of Knox Goderich for many, many years, she was long-time treasurer for the Arthur Circle WMS and was made an honorary member of the WMS in 2010.

Congratulations on your milestone birthday Hazel and God's continued blessings.

New Life Members, Ruth Pollock and Colleen Campbell, Morewood WMS.

Memorials

Jean McQueen MacInnis Dancey

Jean McQueen MacInnis Dancey passed away peacefully at Lakeridge Health in Oshawa. Loving wife of Archibald Dancey (1996). Sister of Kay Pentland (Windsor) and Mary MacInnis (Kingston). Fondly remembered by nieces and nephews, Judy Krol, John Pentland, Kate Pentland and Jim Pentland and their extended family. Step mother to Freda Finley (John) and Ronald Dancey (Lillian) and Great Gramma Jean to their children and grandchildren.

A graduate of Victoria College, University of Toronto, Jean taught in the Ontario Secondary system for many years in Oshawa, and retired from Donovan Collegiate. She was an active member and elder of Knox Presbyterian Church in Oshawa and was involved in the Presbyterian Church of Canada at the national, provincial, and local levels.

Jean had a missionary heart. She not only fully supported WMS in all its activities, but also contributed to PWS&D, the Canadian Bible Society, and other organizations that supported various aspects of caring for God.

Jean was always anxious to hear reports from missionaries first hand and took any opportunity to do so. One of her most memorable trips was an excursion to Malawi to see mission in action.

Jean served as both presbyterial and synodical presidents, and was an active member of WMS local groups at Knox, Oshawa.

Jean had a love for her family, books, teaching and learning, her church connections, and the mission of Jesus Christ to the world.

Norma Evelyn Proudfoot

Beloved by her family, Norma Evelyn Proudfoot passed away on October 17, 2015, at 89 years of age.

Norma was raised on the family farm near Wanham, Alberta. There were many fond memories of life on the farm that she later documented in her book, *Roses on Our Trap Door*. Norma earned her Education degree from the University of Alberta, in Edmonton, where she worked as a teacher. While at the U of A she met her husband Robert and settled in Edmonton, where they raised seven children.

The family later moved on assignment to Zambia, Africa, where she managed the household and activities, as well as volunteered with the YMCA.

Catherine McMillan
Knox WMS,
Belmont ON

Verna Neil
Edith Dath
Joyce Walker
Norma Jamieson
Dr. Margaret Strang
Auxiliary,
First Church,
Chatham ON

Mary R (Bertie)
MacCrimmon
Kenyon Church,
Dunvegan ON

Madeline Horton
North Pelham WMS,
Fenwick ON

Viola Bunyan
H. Anne Tanner
Ruth McLean Auxiliary,
St. Andrew's,
Petrolia ON

Hilda Dayman
Nora Seaton WMS,
Paterson Memorial
Church, Sarnia ON

Florence Fawcett
Knox WMS,
Stratford ON

Mary McKenzie Evening
Auxiliary, Valetta
Presbyterian, Valetta ON

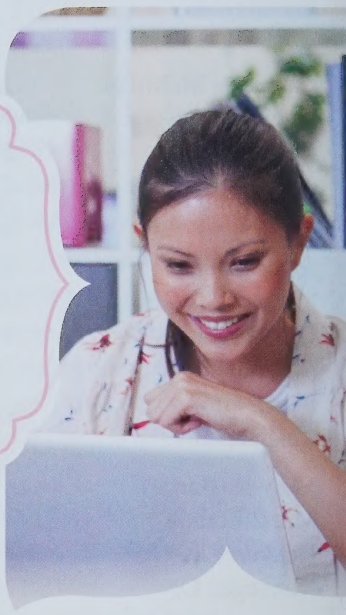
Ali Jane
Marilyn Mount
Knox Presbyterian,
Welland ON

They returned back to normal life in Edmonton where she enjoyed many years with family and friends.

Norma and Robert were long-time members of Edmonton's First Presbyterian Church. Norma contributed greatly as a Sunday school teacher as well as a volunteer with The Women's Missionary Society, and the History and Archives Committee. She served the WMS as synodical president, and thought nothing of driving a car load of ladies down to Medicine Hat for the annual synodical meetings when she was president. She even had a home in her house, known as the WMS room, where she kept all her information and reports regarding the WMS.

Norma is survived by her seven children, Gordon (Laura), Robert (Valerie), Maryanne, David (Patricia), Donald (Katherine), Marilyn, and Duncan (Sharon). She is also blessed with 14 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Norma was predeceased by her husband Robert; parents, George and Olive MacDonald; and siblings, Margaret, Gordon, and Ethel.

The Hub



The Hub. Join the community and be encouraged to serve God in your daily life.

The Hub: an online space for women to share their Reformed faith and how it relates to their daily lives. It is a place to create relationships with women who identify themselves as Presbyterian.

Women of the church will delelop relations with each other, grow in their faith, and deepen their relationship with God.

www.womensHUB.ca

Supported by the
Women's Missionary Society
50 Wyford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
800-619-7301

For more information or to write contact:
amckeown@presbyterian.ca

PM40013283 R951

Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

March/April 2016

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **Mentoring Groups for Ministers**
by Victor Gavino

8 **Mentorship: Walking the Talk Together**
by Denise Allen-Macartney

12 **Mentoring Young People**
by Anne Miller

16 **Mentors in the Line of Fire**
by Christopher Clarke

18 **Talking Together: Women's Spiritual Friendship**
by Margaret C. Clark and M. Elizabeth Clark

22 **It's Time for Justice**

28 **Overheard at a Bible Study**
by Keith E. Boyer

32 **Nagoya, Japan**
by Priscilla Anderson

37 **Mission in Action**

41 **A Guiding Hand**
by Maureen E. Kowal

46 **The Presbyterian Woman of Faith Award**

IN THE SOCIETY

42 **WMS ... Did You Know?**

44 **In the Society**

47 **Remembering**

Glad Tidings
March/April 2016
Volume 92, No. 2
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2016 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

Editorial

I loved reading the articles for this month's *Glad Tidings*. They encouraged me and reminded me of the importance of walking this walk—together. They brought me hope as I learned about new ministers meeting together and supporting one another. They reminded me of past friendships, and of ones that are just beginning. And they affirmed that spending my time as a youth leader matters.

You see, after 10 years of leaving my youth ministry vocation, I am now volunteering at my church as a youth leader. They had asked me to serve in the past, but with young children, I have always said no. Now this year, I felt that I could afford the time and commitment that are required.

But, after 10 years, times have changed, and I have changed. There is some irony in the fact that I 'preached' for many years that you don't have to be young and cool to be a youth leader, and now that I am no longer young or cool (Was I ever?), I am finding this role incredibly challenging. It is hard work. It was easier when I was younger and cooler!

I am almost stunned at how much youth culture has changed over the past 10 years. (Youth didn't bring phones to meetings 10 years ago, and certainly were not connected to them all the time.) I am also finding it harder to connect with the young people. I will admit to having felt like an outsider for much of the Fall. I do have a great co-leader, who is very supporting and encouraging, but she is the young, cool one! My role has changed, and it is taking some time to accept and grow into that role.

Yet, I am thankful that I have the maturity and knowledge that I didn't have 10 years ago. I am thankful, that finally, the youth are beginning to connect with me. Just this past week, I have noticed that the young people are starting to direct questions specifically to me. It is the beginning of a mentoring relationship that I expect will grow stronger in the next few months.

As you read the articles in this month's *Glad Tidings*, think about those who have walked this faith journey with you. Who have been your mentors, pushing you and guiding you when you most needed it? Who have you mentored? If you are not currently helping someone on their journey, I encourage you to start. I consider it a privilege to have been involved, in small ways, in the journey of others, and thank God for the opportunity to share and mentor others.

Mentoring Groups for Ministers

A New Initiative at the Presbyterian College

by Victor Gavino

Presbyterian College is pioneering a program that pairs small groups of ministers in their early years of pastoral work with seasoned mentors, who have extensive experience in fruitful congregational ministry. Running for three years now, the mentorship environment seeks to equip and develop in new ministers, the essential tools required to pastor and to lead our congregations of today. Theological education and training offered by our seminaries remain key elements on the path to ordained ministry in our denomination; however, acquisition and honing of ministry skills do not end at graduation. Now more than ever, learning must continue beyond seminary in face of the very fluid nature of our faith communities today.

The main objective of the mentorship program at Presbyterian College is to help our ministers find the road to revitalization or renewal for the

Participants' Quotes

"My experience has been more than I ever hoped for. Having been on my own without mentorship or solid trustworthy encouragement for a couple years before joining this group was very depleting. This group brings me refreshment and helps me grow and be accountable to others who know what it is like to walk in my shoes.... It will seriously and deeply impact my future as a minister."

"As Pastors we can feel isolated from others and our struggles can feel unique to our own situation. The mentoring lets me know that I am not alone as a pastor going through the struggles I do. I am part of a church family of pastors who I belong together with."

congregations they serve. This needs no explanation as all are aware that Christian denominations including our own, exist in a culture that has become much less interested in church. In addition to this, an important element needs to be recognized: the bonds of friendship and trust that develop within each mentoring group become a well of encouragement for those moments when ministry becomes very challenging. Current statistics on burnout of ministers is quite frightening: up to 80% of seminary and Bible school graduates leave the ministry within the first five years of congregational work (US data). Furthermore, about 75% of practicing ministers report feeling unqualified or poorly trained in areas of leadership and counselling, two essentials in congregational ministry. We believe that the mentoring program has been effective in these two areas by "ministering to the ministers."

am more clear about
ome of my strengths and
eaknesses by thinking
rough issues with the group
nd noticing the
articular
lents
nd gifts
eople
ing to the
ssion."

It is important to note that the College also gains from the mentoring groups in that we listen to our ministers. Through this contact, we maintain a close connection to the life of our congregations throughout the PCC. We are then able to adjust our program, e.g., teaching material and methods, aiming to remain relevant to the constantly-evolving cultural milieu in which our congregations situate themselves.

Over the years, we have increased the reach of our mentoring program so that now there are 31 participants organized into six groups, each one covenanting to meet for two hours every month by videoconference. Our mentors come from a variety of backgrounds and experience: Dale Woods, Chuck Congram, Joan Ashley, Clyde Ervine, and Christine O'Reilly. The minister-participants hail from across Canada, from urban/suburban and rural settings, and graduates of our three theological colleges. Some are in their initial years of ministry, others for much longer. Each year in June after the General Assembly, the College brings everyone together in Montreal for a week of community

Participants' Quotes

"I think that through my involvement in the group, I am becoming more focused not just on reaching a particular goal but on helping my congregation grow in their understanding even as we pursue that goal."

"Thank you for offering this ministry. I feel supported in starting out with you."

building, learning from one other and from invited speakers. Corporate worship and prayer are essential elements of these gatherings. The participants are billeted at the College residence and meals are shared together. The response has been excellent.

Through the years of operating this program, the College has become more aware and immersed in the lives of our congregations via the participating ministers. Our mentors have all created, within their own groups, areas of focus most relevant to their concerns. For example, Christine O'Reilly, who a few months ago agreed to be a mentor, is guiding a group of ministers working in rural ministry. Others tackle the particularities of functioning within the PCC, a task that is sometimes daunting to a new minister. Still others focus on theological reflection, spiritual health, and overall wellness. Above all, the groups consistently orient themselves to figuring out how to minister to their congregations in the best way possible, adopting the most effective approach in leadership.

The College is currently planning on expanding the scope of the mentoring program. We aim to double the number of participants, and to initiate groups specialized in stewardship, church planting, and congregational renewal. We are currently in discussion with experts in these areas who would be willing to join as mentors of these specialized groups.

The program is made possible by a grant from the Ewart Endowment for Theological Education, and from funds of the College. Each participant contributes $240 a year to help cover some of the expenses, such as travel bursaries for participants located more than a six-hour drive from Montreal, videoconferencing technologies, and speaker honoraria.

The College is convinced more than ever that the mentoring program it has begun a little over three years ago has become an important component of theological education and training that has proven extremely helpful to our ministers. If you are interested in joining or supporting us in this initiative, we will be happy to discuss the program with you in more detail. Please contact the Rev. Dr. Victor Gavino at 514-288-5256, ext 206 or by email at vgavino@presbyteriancollege.ca.

The Rev. Dr. Victor C. Gavino joined the Presbyterian College in August 2014 as Coordinator of the Leadership Centre.

Mentorship

Walking the Talk, Together

by Denise Allen-Macartney

There must have been 25 cars in the parking lot that Tuesday morning, when I arrived for my first day as minister on September 1, 2009. Was this a welcome party? Nice, I thought. But the building was quiet. Jan, an elder, handed me the keys and introduced me to Lesley, the secretary.

"Welcome to Gloucester Church," Jan said, gathering her things to go. I was mystified.

"What's with all the cars?" I asked. Jan laughed and pointed to the street corner where an enthusiastic crossing guard ushered kids and parents over to the public school. "First day of school," Jan said. Then she left. I looked at Lesley. We were on our own.

At least, it felt that way.

But I haven't been on my own. Ever.

God has provided friends. And the gift of God's Spirit. One of God's

gifts has been my mentorship group with Presbyterian College.

Brainchild of Principal Dale Woods and Presbyterian College's newly-minted Leadership Centre, these small groups—six and counting—meet monthly by videoconference. Each group is led by an experienced pastor. We brainstorm approaches to challenges. We study books together, share resources, talk about struggles and joys, and pray for each other.

Then, for a week in June, we gather in Montreal. There's est, great food, and lots of prayer. here's good teaching and good fun. What could beat Montreal in June?

Andrew Thompson says the connections he made during Mentoring Week have kept him in ministry. The father of three young children with his wife, Sarah (also a minister), Thompson accepted a call to Knox-St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Dutton, Ontario, last September.

Remembering his first year after ordination in 2011, Thompson says, "I found myself quite isolated." The move from classroom life surrounded by fellow students to serving a small congregation in rural Ontario proved exciting and challenging. "I was blessed with a supportive and gracious congregation, who walked with me as I grew into my role as minister," he says. "Yet there were few peers I could turn to." Discouraged, Andrew decided to check out Mentoring Week. "I left Montreal knowing that I'd be in conversation with a mentoring group every three weeks. I was no longer alone in the work that God had called me to."

Rebecca Simpson, Minister of St. Paul's Church, Mission, B.C., agrees. "I love our mentoring program. It has been a real life line for me many times."

That goes double for me. In my first 18 months at Gloucester Church, our Session of five elders was reduced to three. Our treasurer wanted to resign. One family experienced a tragedy of epic proportions. The congregation needed new direction after some very challenging years.

But how does a new leader develop the congregation's vision? Where do you start? Who can you talk to about how to tackle the deficit? How to help the woman with an infant and a special needs child, whose husband won't join her in Canada after all? Who do you talk to when your own spouse is out of work?

"No one graduating from marketing ends up in the first day running Ford Motor Company," says Dale Woods. "Our vocation is unique in that grads are asked to take on a significant leadership role without first learning the ropes." Mentoring is close to discipling, he adds, which is how Jesus did ministry.

Woods says the advantages ripple out beyond the groups. New grads experience less anxiety than they would on their own. They're free to develop their innate creativity. Congregations reap those benefits, and they gain indirectly from mentors' expertise.

"I guard the time I have with my mentoring group," says Andrew Thompson. "Others share the same struggles and challenges that I do. It's encouraging to know that my peers are praying for me. I covet the ideas and feedback I get from the group."

He especially appreciates the group's emphasis on the inner life and health of the minister. "While other programs focus on developing skills and competencies in a given area of ministry," he explains, "the mentoring program starts with developing a sense of self-awareness and balance between one's own physical, spiritual, and family needs and the work of ministry."

People in my congregation have become true companions—Rebecca laughs heartily and often, and winsomely shares her muscular faith. Jason asks penetrating questions and has grown to love Jesus. Geoff has a quirky sense of humour and a heart for the neighbourhood. Mercy's courage is a force to be reckoned with. Liz marshals kitchen crews and quietly reaches out to folks, who need help. I thank God for this family. They may not know it, but they've each been blessed by my mentorship group. Our congregation is healthier because of the counsel of seven other ministers and our mentor. It's one way God's Spirit is fuelling our renewal.

"Today many congregations are on the edge of survival," says Dale Woods. "So we must be committed to congregational renewal." He sees in mentorship groups a force for change. "I'm hoping that our groups become centres for conversations of renewal," he says. "If we can grow the groups to 60 people, we have the opportunity to help bring renewal to 60 congregations. I know that is a wild dream, but I believe God dreams it."

Denise Allen-Macartney is six years into her ministry at Gloucester Church, Ottawa. Her congregation is exploring new ways of being church in the neighbourhood. She's part of a Presbyterian College Mentorship Group that joins seven ministers in three provinces with their mentor in Montreal. Denise serves on the Board of Governors of Presbyterian College.

Having her cake and eating it, too!

provisionaries
Planting seeds of hope.
For generations to come.

Felicity Alexander

A Presbyterian annuitant who has good reasons to celebrate

'Some years ago I attended a couple of Planned Giving seminars and, after discussions with my son—who is a CA and a Chartered Financial Analyst—I decided that a gift annuity would allow me to leave something to my church when I die, but still enjoy the benefit of income from the money while I am alive. So that's like having my cake and eating it, too. Here's what happened...

'In January 2010, I wrote a cheque for $20,000 to the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and got an immediate charitable donation receipt for $5,600. I receive $1,070 in income from the annuity every year, and, thanks to the CRA, the taxable portion of that annual amount is so small that there's nothing to pay. It's a win-win situation!"

The above words are adapted from a presentation Felicity Alexander made to her home congregation, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, in Brampton, Ontario, on the benefits of gift annuities for both donors and the church.

To learn how you can have your cake and it too, contact Sheryl in the Stewardship & Planned Giving Department for a free, no-obligation gift annuity quote.

What will your legacy be?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
ssutton@presbyterian.ca • 1-800-619-7301 ext. 265
presbyterian.ca/pg

The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Gift annuity rates are subject to change.

mentoring young people

by Anne Miller

"Mentoring is a life-long commitment to be God's visual aids—in the company of others, with focus on others."

Mentors—such a wonderful word that can bring powerful experiences, heartfelt emotions, and wonderful people to mind. I have had many in my life and continue to have many. The blessing that each of them has been to me is hard to put into words.

Some of my mentors were "assigned" in some way. Looking out for me was part of their responsibilities as an elder, minister, field education supervisor, or synod staff person. Some were just people walking the same journey, who were a few or many steps ahead, and who continued to patiently look back to see how I was doing and to encourage me. Not all people "assigned" to us will become our active mentors. The very reason mine are still precious to me is because of our unique relationship. We just clicked. The way they lived and shared their faith and took the time to know and accept me as I was made the relationship powerful and life-giving.

These people were willing to be real with me, to challenge me, to put up with my weaknesses and still champion me. They provided safe space and not indoctrination. They offered understanding rather than hollow answers. They laughed and sometimes cried with me. They have made a huge difference and have helped me to survive the sometimes challenging world of the church.

When I attended the Calvin Symposium on Worship a few years ago, I was privileged to spend part of a day with Chap Clark. Chap has done extensive research and writing on youth in the United States. This has culminated in, among other things, the Sticky Faith books and curriculum. He said something that particularly wowed me that day, but that I had to admit was reality in my own

ministry at the time. In the 1980s and even 1990s, if you were doing youth ministry and had one adult leader for every five young people, you had a pretty good ratio for meeting their needs. Today, with so much brokenness, so many challenges, so many negative influences at their fingertips, you need five adults nurturing and supporting each youth for them to have a fighting chance of moving successfully into adulthood.

Looking back, I had far more than five mentors when I was in high school. I was connected to the church in many ways—PYPS, Presbyterian Music Camp, my home church, and an inter-denominational Youth Parliament. At each of these opportunities, I met caring adults, and usually at least one I really connected with who showed me another glimpse of God and how to follow Jesus. I was incredibly blessed and all of these experiences shaped me in powerful ways.

But for many children and youth, this isn't the case. Many can't even rely on their parents to mentor them in life skills, let alone having a life of faith. We are experiencing a phenomenon of grandparents bringing grandchildren to church because parents are either too busy or don't care about it or are turned off church for a wide variety of reasons. We are in a time where so many previous sources of guidance and support are either stretched too thin to meet the need or are disappearing.

I say this not to create panic (I'm guessing many of you have noticed these things too), but to highlight how vital the role is that we have been given to be a positive influence. If we are part of the church, and have been blessed by having trailblazers ahead of us whose hands we could hold onto for the journey, we need to take our other hand and reach back to those behind us. We need to forget the idea that only certain people are qualified to nurture faith and develop life-changing relationships with our kids. We need to get over the belief that we've done our time after a certain number of years of service. No, as long as we are on the journey, we are still called to be salt and light to the younger generations, and they notice.

Being a mentor is sometimes a very formal thing, like mentors for young people moving through confirmation. It is a set relationship with expectations and roles and is for a specific time period. These are important, but the vast majority of mentors are informal. They are the people, who wash dishes with youth after the spaghetti supper and who ask how things are really going. They are the people, who make a phone call when something bad happens in the family. They are the people, who suggest to youth ways they could become more involved and develop their gifts at church, creating more friendships,

and growing as individuals. They are the people, who notice when a young person is not at church and send a facebook message or text. They are the people, who celebrate accomplishments and steps in faith.

Mentoring is a tremendous opportunity which blesses both the mentor and the mentoree. God uses these relationships to grow both people, to enrich the connection with each other and with God. We celebrate and learn about life together, we gain different perspectives, we are kept humble, we are reminded of how much our faith has made a difference in our own lives, and we learn to be grateful to those who have shown us the way and modelled how to share it with others.

Many reading this are probably already informal mentors. Particularly in smaller churches where everyone seems to have known each other since birth, mentoring happens naturally. The children and youth are enveloped by the rest of the congregation and know they matter. The bonds are strong and everyone benefits. In larger churches, there are often families that just seem to click with us and we celebrate as the kids grow older, checking in with them Sunday mornings and giving high fives when they get a good grade or that first job or commit to confirmation.

There is definitely a place for those, who are more intentional about supporting young people. Youth leaders are often stretched thin to create programs, arrange logistics around varied schedules, and provide support to the youth. Pray about your willingness to be a support in some way, whether it's showing up for activities and helping in the kitchen, or sitting with the group as an active presence to support both leaders and kids, or being a driver and having great conversations to and from destinations, or committing to pray for the youth and getting to know a bit about some of them so that you can name things in prayer that is important to them.

It is vital that Leading with Care is taken into account. As soon as there is an adult working with a young person, there are issues at play. If you are interested in working one on one with a youth or being a support at a youth group, speak with your minister or youth staff about setting healthy boundaries and maintaining confidentiality that are reassuring to you, the youth, and their parents, as well as respectful of the existing leadership. A workshop on mentoring I attended at APCE in Toronto offered some important things to keep in mind:

1. mentoring always happens in the context of community
2. care and accountability always need to be kept in balance
3. it can be easy to exercise control over the mentoree—be aware and avoid it
4. do more listening than talking—you are not an expert or a doctor (my note: go to your minister if

Mentoring needs to become
o much a part of our lifestyle
's like breathing or seatbelts."

a youth threatens harm to self or another or has issues that make you feel overwhelmed or uncomfortable)

5. have a clear understanding of limits and place—meet in public places for set times
6. keep it focused on prayer to move it beyond a friendship

Some other quotes I caught during that workshop that may inspire you:

"Mentoring is a life-long commitment to be God's visual aids—in the company of others, with focus on others."

"Mentoring needs to become so much a part of our lifestyle it's like breathing or seatbelts."

I have been privileged to be a mentor to a number of young people. It's not always easy, but the times when it isn't are a reminder that we can lean into God and our own mentors for strength and that we are not alone. I wouldn't trade the rich experiences I've had for anything. Mentoring has taught me as much about myself and my gifts, blind spots, and growth edges as anything has. Young people have an uncanny way of holding a mirror up to us, forcing us to walk the talk, be real, and be full of gratitude.

Don't under estimate the gifts you have to share from your journey. Don't miss the opportunity to nurture and engage with the amazing young people around you. You may be the one who benefits the most.

Anne Miller is a lay worship leader, Christian educator, and the Creative Director of Seeds of Grace Resources (www.seedsofgraceresources.ca). She loves chocolate, walks, good movies, and good conversation about the church and where we are going.

by Christopher Clarke

Mentors in the Line of Fire

It's been noted that the Apostle Paul spelled out mentoring as his leadership model very simply, "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). This past week, I have been thinking about the people, who poured themselves into me to help me be in the position I am in today, a position where I get to: preach about my faith and beliefs weekly; walk alongside both those experiencing great joy and those who are suffering; and have the privilege of being able to set aside the time to ponder God's word and rest in His presence.

I've been thinking about this because one of the older, almost retired, ministers in my presbytery has been taking the time to encourage another young minister and me. He has sought out learning opportunities for us and offered his guidance and help as we attempt to complete jobs that are slightly beyond our abilities. Pushing us just past the comfort zone so that we aren't too complacent, and that we continue to learn and to improve—something we all need—has been his method. It makes me think of an ad I have on my office wall, which says, "You can't find your strong if you're not looking for it."

He hasn't left us out to dry though. He has taken the time to pull me aside, and I assume the other minister as well, to tell me about the new-found hope he has for the church, thanks to the young ministers he has been working with lately. He took me

aside to tell me that, even if I may feel in over my head in a given situation, I should remember that I am where I am supposed to be and that God has empowered me and will continue to do so and to trust my instincts. And he means it. At times, when he has noticed me being quiet at meetings, he carefully got me to speak, opening the door to many important conversations that really did need to take place.

The point of all this is that I appreciate the boost in morale I received from this minister and the confidence I derived from his kind words. There are others who give of their time, no matter how long I keep them on the phone or hovering over coffee, no matter how silly I sense my question or issue is, no matter how busy they are, they find the time to pour into me, and I am grateful and stronger for it.

There is a cycle to all of this. When I was in seminary, I helped out anyone I could, and tried to build up the students around me and in earlier years. Today, I try to help the staff and volunteers around St. Andrew's "find their strong" and I think they appreciate that. They also appreciate being told they are doing a wonderful job. In our culture, we can sometimes be cynical to the point where we refuse to praise others because we fear it will "go to their heads." Sometimes that is just what everyone needs.

Who are you mentoring? What happens when you see potential in someone in your life? Whose example are you following? Who follows yours? What happens if they do? These are all questions worth spending some time considering because Paul, the apostles, and the whole church were built by people who carefully answered those questions.

Chris Clarke lives with his wife and two little boys while pastoring at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Duncan, BC, and blogs at standrewsduncan.org/musings.

Who are you mentoring? What happens when you see potential in someone in your life? Whose example are you following? Who follows yours? What happens if they do?

Talking Together

Women's Spiritual Friendships

by Margaret B. Clark and M. Elizabeth

Margaret: Guess what? This week I received an email from the editor of *Glad Tidings*, who saw my biography as a spiritual director on the Providence Renewal Centre website. She thought I might be interested in writing something about spiritual friendships between women. One of her questions caught my attention, "What differences can it make in your life and the life of others to find a spiritual friend?" I immediately thought of you and of our spiritual friendship. Would you be interested in co-writing something with me?

Mary: You know, I would! A class I'm taking on 'The Sacred Feminine' is introducing me to the writings of Julian of Norwich, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and other Beguine mystics. Their writings really touch me because they validate my instinct that being feminine is at the heart of my spirituality and my spiritual relationships. These women bonded, shared, and lived their spiritual experiences from an internal, intuitive perspective.

I also discovered Joan Chittister's book, *The Friendship of Women*. After exploring, in her introduction, the fact that friendship was historically denied to women or denigrated and dismissed by scholars, she rejoices that:

> "Until now. Until our time. Until that is, the release of energy that came with women's new awareness of themselves led women to speak of their own experiences. Until psychology began the analysis of human relationships and discovered, lo and behold, that relationship was of the essence of being woman."

This is what I know and have always known to be of value about myself. How do you think women experience and share friendship?

Margaret: Your course and readings are a wonderful coincidence and add another layer of depth to our sharing. In response to your question, I think women tend to be good "heart" listeners. Scary as it can be for me at times, when we share in our spiritual friendship, I end up feeling truly heard. You don't let me cop out at a superficial level. Rather, you stay with me by reflecting back to me what you hear, until I feel my true voice has listened to. Like you, I believe this is an inherently feminine quality.

But focusing this quality in a concrete friendship takes something else. It takes commitment. You and I pray for one another daily and have committed to be "honest" with one another. For me, this means not giving up when I'm uncomfortable with what is being said or what I am feeling. We often come back to topics that are heavy, but also real. Working through these important ideas takes faith in one another and in God. So often, for me anyway, sharing at this level deepens my spirituality and my faith. How about you, does any of this make sense?

Mary: It truly does. Being in a committed spiritual friendship can be hard work. We are 'on the cutting edge', sometimes cutting to the core of who we are. I have to trust that I won't be shamed or dismissed when I share from my heart. There is also, as Chittister terms it, "reverence," where I experience

"In your and my spiritual friendship, there is mutuality. We explore our lives as we live them as equals. Our friendship flourishes because of that."

respect for who I am in my spiritual journey. This is vital in a relationship where I let myself be as vulnerable, as I do with you.

The grace that I experience in my spiritual practice comes from being honest with God and then, because of feeling unconditional acceptance with God, being honest with myself about my true reactions, responses, and motives. Being open and truthful with God, in my vulnerability, is the centre of my spiritual life. To then share some of it with someone else means that I trust that person to have reverence for me. This idea of reverence, I believe, is mutual. My goal is to listen to you with reverence. So how can we nurture our spiritual friendship?

Margaret: Yes, that's it exactly, both trust and reverence, as you've described it, dwelling in a sacred space that grows between us. It is really a relationship among three: you, God, and me. Without God being essential to each of our personal lives, the depth of our spiritual friendship would not be the same. I'd say it's by living our separate spiritual lives faithfully and then sharing them mutually that we nurture our spiritual friendship.

For me, I am aware that meeting regularly with a spiritual director has been important to my spiritual growth over the years. This is a different kind of spiritual relationship. My spiritual director is educated in the art of spiritual guidance and has expertise that helps me explore wide-ranging approaches to spirituality and prayer. I realize there is a power difference between us insofar as I am the one who is seeking help and guidance. It is not mutual.

In your and my spiritual friendship, there is mutuality. We explore our lives as we live them as equals. Our friendship flourishes because of that. So, as we begin to wrap this up, how do you think one finds a spiritual friend?

Mary: Well, being sisters is our blessing! Other than having God put it in one's heart to long for spiritual companionship, I don't know if there is a specific formula to find one, but I do think there is a recognition that comes, a feeling of heightened empathy for and acceptance toward another's life.

When you also receive that in return, that is the nudge to discern spiritual with another companion. But there must be a willingness to commit to a shared joy in God.

Margaret: Well named! We don't go out to find spiritual friends. God gifts us with them and, when we recognize a spiritual friend, the invitation is to nurture growth through trust, reverence, honesty, and empathy. What a wonderful conversation we've had! Thanks for sharing this experience of offering encouragement to women reading *Glad Tidings*, who might be interested in exploring spiritual friendships.

Margaret B. Clark is an Instructor at St. Stephen's College and is on the Spiritual Directors Roster at Providence Renewal Centre, both in Edmonton, Alberta. M. Elizabeth Clark is her sister and committed spiritual friend.

Selected Bibliography

Aelred of Rievaulx. Spiritual Friendship. Spencer, MA: Cistercian, 1989.

Benner, David. Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship and Direction. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006.

Chittister, Joan. The Friendship of Women: The Hidden Tradition of the Bible. Jackson, Tennessee: BlueBridge, 2006.

DeTurris Poust, Mary. Walking Together: Discovering the Catholic Tradition of Spiritual Friendship. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2010.

Devers, Dorothy. Christian Growth and Spiritual Direction through Faithful Friendship. Cincinnati, OH: Forward Movement Publications, 1979/1980.

Edwards, Tilden, Spiritual Friends: Reclaiming the Gift of Spiritual Direction. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980.

Leech, Kenneth. Soul Friend: The Practice of Christian Spirituality. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1977.

Malone, Mary. Women and Christianity, Volume II. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001.

Mechthild of Magdeburg. The Flowing Light of Godhead. Trans. Frank Tobin. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998.

Miller, Wendy. Learning to Listen: A Guide for Spiritual Friends. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1993.

Norwich, Julian. The Showings of Julian of Norwich. Trans. Mirabai Starr. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads, 2013.

O'Donohue, John. Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom. New York, NY: Cliff Street Books, 1997.

Sellner, Edward. The Celtic Soul Friend. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2002.

IT'S TIME FOR JUSTICE

International Affairs Committee

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 5:44)

Freedom of religion is enshrined in human rights declarations. Many countries recognize this in their laws. Yet no religion is free from violent persecution somewhere in the world. The gap between protections promised in laws and what is experienced by religious believers on the ground can be immense. Religious persecution is often religiously motivated, but it can also be intertwined in larger social or political conflicts within and between societies and countries.

Ghar wapsi is a Hindu fundamentalist movement. In several states in India, members of this movement have influence over civil authorities and government legislation (anti-conversion laws have been established in some provinces, for example) that persecute Muslim and Christian minorities. One reason

ultra-nationalist Hindu organizations attack Bhil Christians may be the fear that religious freedom could lead to unsettling established cultural and political regimes.

The Church of North India, a partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, has spoken out against *Ghar wapsi*.

The Church Responds

The Moderator of the 141st General Assembly (2015) wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs expressing the PCC's concerns about the attacks on Christians and other religious minorities in India. Write your own letter. The Moderator's letter can be used as a template – it's posted on the Church's website at http://presbyterian.ca/iac.

What can you do?

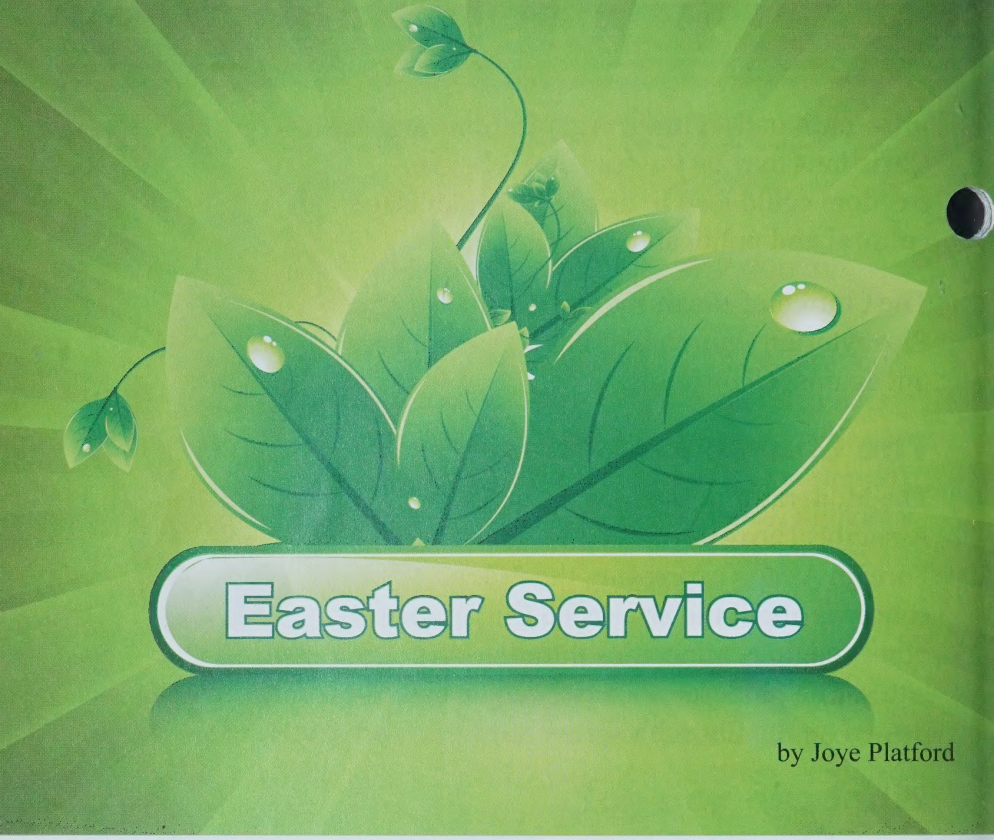
General Assembly recommended that congregations pray for all people being persecuted and for their persecutors, that they have a change of heart; and pray for an end to violence.

Prayer

O God, we pray for all persecuted people. Give us compassion for their plight. Soften our hearts to their situation, and help us follow your lead in seeking justice and mercy on their behalf. Amen.

The International Affairs Committee is mandated by General Assembly to monitor an draw the church's attention to international issues. Its report is on pp. 294-309 of the A&P 2015.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada



Easter Service

by Joye Platford

Note from the author:

I write this service having known my own cycles of life, death, and resurrection. I am a cancer survivor and a minister. In 2009, I was diagnosed with cancer. I remember telling the congregation where I was serving in Medicine Hat, Alberta "I will be back in four months." Well I was back in 20 months and much had changed in my life as well as theirs. It was decided that my time there had come to an end and for the church to close. I cannot leave out my emotions in this story because there was a range—from anger to relief, grief, anticipation and expectation, shock and openness. For the congregation, choices had to be made: some to join the other Presbyterian church, some to find another church family, and others just to take a break.

My life has been different as well as I had to find a new way. I tried to go to a short-term ministry in a traditional small church in Northern Saskatchewan. I did

not adapt well—I had not let go of all that had happened in the past and my expectations for the future. I left to come back to my home community in Pinawa, Manitoba. I had to let go of the old—hurts, ways, and expectations—and live the new—possibilities, tasks, and ways. I found work in substitute teaching, filling pulpit supply, as well as doing and teaching art therapy. I now have a new job teaching Art for grade 7-12 students, along with high school Family Studies. My life is not what I expected. It is different and I have trust in God. I am living in my resurrection made possible by faith.

Preparation:

You will need a table with a cross on it, two slips of paper for each individual, and a pen or pencil for each person.

Call to Worship:

Psalm 25:4-6 (New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.
Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.

Opening Prayer:

All: God of the ages, we spread our lives before you.

We are as a people in many points and stages of our lives. You are in all those points and stages— of struggle, of death, of life; stages of beginnings, middles, and endings. In Christ's life, we see all these stages reflected. In the Spirit's care, we know all these events are held in your love and grace and all is redeemed and transformed.

Forgive us our reluctance to see. Prod us in our stubbornness to respond. Deepen us in our awareness of the work of your Holy hand. Amen.

Leader: We may not always see the path, but our choice is to walk in trust. Peace be with you on your path of life. The Peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you. (You may exchange the peace as your practice.)

Scripture: Read John 19:25–27

Reflection:

Here Jesus is making his final emotional preparations for death. He is preparing for the care of his mother and that John will take that role. In this moment, there is a finality that there is no other way—death will come. Such is also the case at times in our lives; we only struggle in the face of evident endings, and we wish it could be different but it is not.

The death of a loved one, refugees fleeing from their home country, divorce, closure of a church, end of a ministry, end of hearing the stories of the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation), a spouse going into long-term care because of dementia, relationship loss, cancer, job loss. So many of these things mean an ending.

On strips of paper, write down losses or endings that you see, or are facing. When you have finished, place them on the table.

Hymn: #242 — What wondrous love is this

Scripture: Read 1 Corinthians 15:35–49

My friend and colleague, the Rev. Peter Bush says, "You have to die to live!" Jesus went into that time of darkness. It is finished. Seeds are planted, buried in the ground—we cannot wish for them to grow. The transformation happens when we let go of power or influence. This is when God's sparks rekindle and transform us. Hand out flower seeds or bulbs in unmarked envelopes, to be taken home or to be planted in pots or in the garden.

Hymn: # 674 — In the bulb there is a flower

Scripture: Read John 20:17–18

We get so excited with new beginnings and new life. We can also be relieved that finally we are on the other side of a hard time, and life is going to get better now. I wonder how Mary was feeling? I remember when a friend called me and said that he moved back to town. I was so excited that our friendship could go back to just the way we left it. However, he had changed and I had changed. It would not be possible to pick up exactly as we were before.

Sometimes we are tempted to rebuild on what it was like before—same traditions, same songs, same habits, or same actions. We are not opening our eyes to the work of the Spirit. We are not seeing the healing or transformation. We are clinging to a past and not allowing for a future. Think what you wrote

on your strip of paper for the foot of the cross. Write it on a strip to take home with you. As you watch your plant grow, meditate on the new transformations of your situation and how you may be trying to hold on to the old.

Hymn: Behold I make all things new
(From Iona community) or #236
Now the green blade rises

Prayer:

Loving God, we leave this time having pondered the different stages in the walk of life. We know that not all can be simplified, and that we cannot hurry, rush, or skip a stage in life. Jesus lived each step ahead of us.

Help us to see you in each step of our life events. When we are stuck or resistant, remind us of your presence.

We thank you for the life, work, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We thank you for the forgiveness and grace that is extended to us through him.

It is our hope that we, as your church and people, will be able to experience the transformative life given to followers of Jesus. May you use us to extend Jesus' love, forgiveness, and grace into the world.
Amen.

Sung Benediction:
#260 — Alleluia, Alleluia

OVERHEARD AT A BIBLE STUDY

by Keith E. Boyer

Normally the Wednesday evening Bible study was led by Pastor Carol. On the rare occasion when she was away, the group met for open and unstructured conversation on a selected passage. One evening, not long ago, they read the story of God's call to the young boy Samuel (I Samuel 3). As you will see, the conversation turned to the theme of *mentoring*.

Sarah opened the conversation. "The old priest Eli reminds me of my grandmother. I am a Christian because of her interest in my spiritual growth. As a teen, I lived with her for three summers. Every night we read the Bible and had evening prayers."

"I'd say the same about my grandfather," said Stuart. "He was the most … how should I say it … he was the godliest man I've ever known."

Several others quickly and easily named parents, uncles, aunts, teachers, friends, and pastors as important and valued in their faith development.

Joan was the first to use the word. "I think we are talking about mentors… spiritual mentors." With that comment, the remainder of the evening focused on the importance of mentoring in faith development and spiritual maturity.

They re-read the passage: *Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord*

called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."' (I Samuel 3:7–9b)

"That's Eli mentoring Samuel," said Sarah. "He discerned the situation and instructed Samuel on how to respond."

"Let's brainstorm," John suggested, going to an easel and picking up a marker. No one was surprised. John always sat close to the easel. "Let's make a list of the qualities involved in good mentoring." It proved to be a good idea. The sheet of newsprint was quickly filled with words and phrases: discerning, wise, sensitive, aware, person of prayer, faithful, experienced, older, insightful, role model, listener, learner, humble, available, trustworthy, patient, and authentic.

As John returned to his seat, the conversation became especially personal. Pearl, who had been silent while the list was compiled, appeared increasingly uncomfortable. "I feel left out. I never had a mentor as a child. I never knew my grandparents. My parents divorced when I was nine and my mother had no time for church. I'm only here because Phil's parents pressured us to have Chloe baptized. I enjoyed meeting with Pastor Carol and thought I'd give church a try. So here I am trying to learn. But I'm searching. I'd love to have a mentor with all those qualities."

Bob, who had also said very little, observed, "It looks to me as if everyone would benefit from having a mentor, but how does it happen? I mean, are some people like Sarah just lucky while Pearl and I got the short end of the stick? Some of you could name two or three people who were mentors. I can't. Is it just being in the right place and time? What would have happened to Samuel if his mother hadn't committed him to help Eli? And where would Sarah be if she hadn't spent summers with her grandmother? It's not …"

"Eli could have told Samuel to stop waking him up," Pearl interrupted. "That's what my mother would have told me!"

"I was saying it's not as if there are "Spiritual Mentor" listings in the help wanted ads," Bob continued. "Some of us feel really inadequate and envy those, who seem to have their spiritual lives together."

There was a moment of awkward silence following Pearl and Bob's honest sharing. Desperately wanting to say something helpful, Sarah observed, "Do you remember a few years ago we had a student minister who told us that in addition to preparing to be a pastor she was studying to become a spiritual

director? To me, that sounds a lot like mentoring. Perhaps finding a spiritual director is how Pearl and Bob can get the mentoring they have missed."

"Or perhaps we could be mentors for each other," John reflected. "Most of us meet here every week and we have learned a lot about the Bible. I'd like to think we have even become friends. I wonder, could our Bible study group be a time for mentoring?"

"I think we can encourage each other in our faith, but mentoring is one on one," said Stuart. But then he added, "Of course Jesus mentored his disciples as a group as well as individually."

"Does mentoring have to involve a one on one?" asked Joan. "Can a passage of scripture, a novel, a play, or a movie be effective in enabling spiritual growth? What about pastor Carol's sermons? Can they be like Eli speaking to Samuel?"

"God uses many ways to help us grow. I sense God's presence while I'm working in the garden. But I see mentoring as focused, intentional, and personal," said Stuart. "Just last week at presbytery we approved a recommendation that a minister who has run into some problems be assigned a mentor to help him adjust his style of leadership. No one suggested reading a book would be enough. It had to be one on one personal."

"Stuart, you said Jesus was a mentor for his disciples. I think considering Jesus' mentoring skills would be a good direction for this conversation to take," suggested Sarah. "For example, I see him as amazingly perceptive. I think of the man who had been lying by the pool of Bethzatha for 38 years waiting for someone to help him into the pool. Jesus asked him, 'Do you want to be well?' The man didn't answer the question. Instead, he gave a well-rehearsed speech about being a victim. Jesus interrupted him and told him to get up and walk! He mentored that man to good health." (John 5:2–10)

Jesus was skillful in helping people to lead new lives. We could fill another sheet of newsprint naming those who had a life-changing relationship with him," John said with his eye on the easel.

"John, I think you just said it all," said Joan. "Effective mentoring is more than giving instructions. Mentoring involves a transformational relationship! Samuel was never the same because of his relationship with Eli. Peter, James, John, and the other disciples were never the same. Mary and Martha were never the same. The man at the pool was never the same. All because of their relationship with Jesus."

Bob was getting excited. "Each of us could benefit from a mentoring relationship! I know I could use a spiritual companion. I suggest

between now and next week that we each seek to discern who that might be for us. We have a list of qualities. Who knows, if we find the right person, in a year or two the mentorees might be seen by someone else as a mentor. I think I'd like that!"

All were in agreement with Bob's suggestion. Sarah offered a closing prayer.

FOR REFLECTION DISCUSSION

You can think about these questions on your own, or use them together in a small group setting, such as a WMS group

The Bible study group made a list of qualities required for "good mentoring." Re-read the list. Are there any qualities you would add? Any you would remove?

What Biblical stories describing transformational or spiritual mentoring can you recall?

Sarah, Pearl, Stuart, and Bob had very different personal histories. Which of their stories is more like your own?

If you are able, share or reflect on a personal story of spiritual mentoring.

Bob proposes each member of the Bible study group identify a person who might be asked to be a mentor. If you accepted that challenge, who comes to mind? Would you consider asking her/him to consider a mentoring relationship?

What mentoring skills and qualities do you recognize in yourself?

Nagoya, Japan

The Andersons with Pak Myung Ja

October 2015

by Priscilla Anderson

It was a beautiful autumn day when members and many friends of Nagoya Korean Church gathered in the sanctuary, to celebrate 30 years in the present building. It is the third structure in Nagoya since the beginning of the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ). This one has seven stories, built to accommodate both a Nursery School and a Nursing care facility welcoming both Japanese and Koreans to receive the loving care provided by the staff.

The WMS, both Eastern and Western Divisions, from the onset

of the relationship between the PCC and the KCCJ, beginning with appointment of the Rev. Luther and Miriam Young in 1927, has supported kindergartens in many churches as an outreach to the community. A few years ago, in recognition of the reputation which Nagoya Korean Nursery School holds in the community, the City of Nagoya asked the church to extend its capacity to look after more children than the two floors in the present building could accommodate. It is now three years since a four storey building was erected just across from the church, which now has 117 children enrolled. Working parents can drop their children off knowing they will be well looked after in a modern facility with well-trained staff. The children learn Christian songs and perform in programs at Christmas and Easter, which are well attended.

Last May, we received a telephone call from the pastor, the Rev. Dr. Song Jae Kim, inviting my husband and I to attend the celebration as guests of the Nursery School. Bob was the first Chair of the Board of Directors back in the 1970s and Principal of the Kindergarten.

Although we felt honoured by the invitation, we felt that it was also recognition of the prayer and financial support that The Presbyterian Church in Canada had provided over the years, and we would be representing the wider church. In responding to the invitation, I was particularly concerned that the 13 plus hours on a plane might be too much at our age. However, the enthusiastic urging of Pastor Kim, the anticipation of meeting with the people we had known in the years we served with them, and the joy of spending time with our daughter, Deborah, and her family in Kamakura before the celebration, encouraged us to accept. So, on September 25, we arrived at Narita airport where we were met by Deborah and her husband, Kazunari Takahashi, and taken to their new home, a three hour journey by car.

After a delightful week with them, we had sufficiently recovered from "jet lag" to travel to Nagoya for the celebration. We were only on the platform a couple of minutes before we saw a beautiful young women coming towards us and waving a welcome. She introduced herself as Yuki Arai, the Assistant Pastor of Nagoya Church. A young elder, De O Kang, was waiting in his car to drive us to the lovely, modern Nagoya Cypress Hotel, reserved for us for the next two nights by the Nursery School. They left us there with bottles of water and ingredients for coffee and suggested we rest until Elder Kang would pick up and take us to dinner.

Later, we arrived at a Japanese restaurant where were joined by Pastor Song Jae Kim, his wife, Elder Kang's mother, his wife and

Eishin nursery school building

10-month-old son, as well as other leaders in the Church. The eight-course meal, and a pleasant two hour conversation in Japanese, some of which we remembered, brought the evening to a close and we were driven back to the hotel.

The morning of the celebration, Pastor Kim, despite his busy schedule, drove us to a day care centre for seniors provided by Nagoya Korean Church, where we met the director To Heyoun Kim, who welcomed us warmly and guided us to a large room where some seniors were playing games, others having massages, and others enjoying conversation with friends. They were all happy and delighted to meet someone from Canada. One lady was 102 and in good health. The seniors are also given the traditional Japanese bath and a delicious, nutritious lunch before being taken back to their homes at the end of the day.

From there, we went for lunch with Pastor Kim and Pak Myung Ja, former Principal and present Director of the Board of the Nursery School, and heard about their hopes and dreams for the further witness to the Gospel, using the rooms vacated by the nursery school.

At precisely 1:30, we were ushered to the front pew in the sanctuary and the proceedings began. The Principal of the Nursery School brought greetings as did several

others, including my husband who stressed that Nagoya Korean Church had always been a community which reached out to others, both Japanese and Korean in the Name of Christ. He presented letters of congratulations from the Moderator of the 141st General Assembly, the Rev. Karen Horst, from Principal Dorcas Gordon, Knox College, and from Principal Dale Woods, Presbyterian College, Montreal. (The Rev. In Ha Lee, past General Secretary of the KCCJ, had received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Knox College and the Rev. Ii Seng Whang, former minister of Nagoya Church, from Presbyterian College.)

The key-note speaker told of the struggles she and her pastor husband had had in setting up a facility for severely handicapped people and of the discrimination of society towards those mentally challenged. Through love and perseverance, the objections had been overcome. Although her husband had passed away after a long illness, she is still carrying on the work they began together.

The program included a solo by an opera singer, a member of the Church, who sang with intense feeling, "You lift me up," in both Japanese and English. Each participant was presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a sincere thank you for being there.

We adjourned to the 6th floor where a table was laid with "light" refreshments. More introductions

Nagoya Korean Church

followed, of Church leaders and supporters of the Nursery School, but the main entertainment was a lively presentation by three young people (one Japanese) of traditional Korean drums.

After a brief interval, we were escorted to a nearby hotel for another delicious dinner, along with the other participants in the celebration.

The day ended with Pastor Kim and his wife driving us to a hospital on the outskirts of Nagoya where we visited Elder Kim Jo Nam, who was a generous contributor to the Nursery School and Church from its inception. Despite his weakness because of chemotherapy treatments, he received us warmly as old friends. Bob led us in prayer for his recovery, it was very emotional moment.

The following morning, we opted to attend the second service which was in Japanese and we were joined by two Japanese friends for World Communion Sunday, which was conducted by an elder. The Rev. Yuki Arai preached the sermon and celebrated Holy Communion in the absence of Dr. Kim who was sharing the service in a Japanese Church.

We are so grateful to the Board of the Nursery School and the members of Nagoya Church who received us warmly, and to our loving God who looked after us all the way.

Diane Tait-Katerberg
Palestine and Israel
December 31 in Palestine

One of the challenges one faces here is the normalization of what should not be normal. When spending three hours at the checkpoint at Qalandiya (between East Jerusalem and Ramallah in the West Bank) one can find oneself saying it was a good day when the thousand or so people trying to get to their jobs in East Jerusalem move through the dehumanizing line-ups fairly. But they should not have to do this at all in their own land, let alone cope with the stresses caused when the occupying Israeli guards seem to make a game of how many gates to open or how many to let through at a time or who to turn back (No one under 50 years of age today. The computer couldn't read your card so you have to go out and try again later.)

I marvel at the patience of the Palestinians, but they've been living with this their whole lives. They, and their ancestors, have always lived here yet they are classified only as "residents," not citizens, and are without rights in the eyes of the Israeli government.

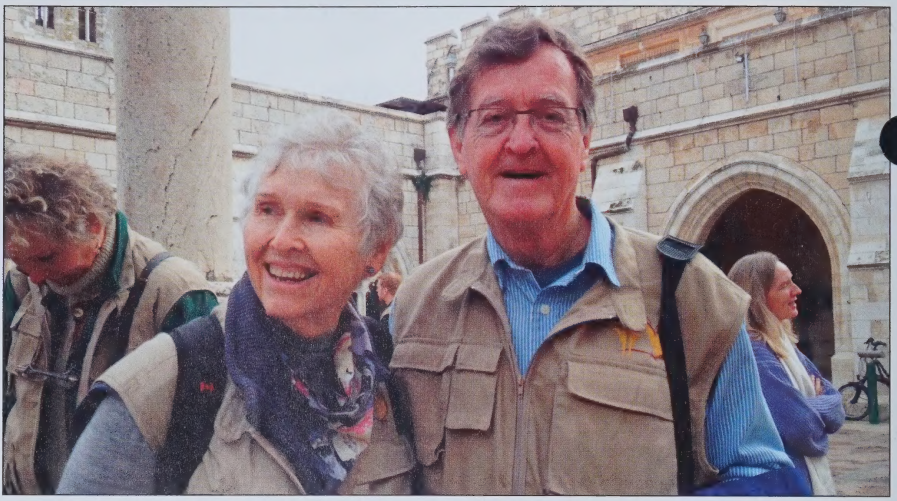
I am glad to be here and to meet people struggling for a peaceful solution—Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals. I have learned that a lot of the problems have arisen because of actions and decisions of the colonial nations (Britain, France, and others), and that other powers' efforts to end the struggle have often been shaped by their interests and sometimes imposed without real consideration of local cultures and needs. But change may not actually happen unless other nations insist on it by means of economic sanctions and divestment.

It is New Year's Eve as I write this. May 2016 be filled with hope and may peace be known in this land and others struggling with violence and turmoil—and in your homes and families.

Demolitions and Despair

Watching the bulldozer destroy the almost completed home of a Palestinian family, was difficult. Dust rose in clouds and the roar of the bulldozer's engine was inescapable. Amid the rubble was the hopelessness that this family must have been experiencing. I felt helpless at the injustice, and could only pray to God. As part of the Ecumenical Accompaniment (EA) Program in Palestine/Israel, this scene has been too often part of my daily experience.

In 1948 the United Nations adopted resolution 181, dividing the territory known today as Israel/Palestine into two entities: Jewish and Arab. Jerusalem and parts of Bethlehem would be international



zones. There were unsatisfied parties in both the Jewish and the Arab communities. As the British began pulling out, some Palestinians stepped up attacks and Jewish forces immediately began a systematic campaign to enlarge the area recommended for the Jewish State. Many Palestinians were removed from the land. The Jewish forces, though fewer in number, were better armed and organized. On May 15, 1948, Israel declared itself to be an independent sovereign state.

After the war, Palestinian representatives were not invited to the armistice talks during which the "Green Line" was drawn, giving the state of Israel 22% more land than the original Partition Plan. 80% of the non-Jewish population in the area became refugees and were settled in camps in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and surrounding Arab countries. Many refugee camps remain to this day.

Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza are stateless. In the West Bank, Palestinians live under Israeli military law which means that land can be confiscated if the military defense force deems the land necessary for national security or military purposes. Israel continues to build settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The current Government of Canada considers the Jewish settlements illegal—as did previous governments. These new Jewish settlements are often built encircling Palestinian homes or villages. Meanwhile Palestinians Living in Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, who want to build or improve their homes, are denied permits. Only about 7% of Palestinian applications are granted. If a home is built without a permit, it is demolished —often just a few

days after it is finished, leaving a family without a home or the financial resources to start again.

I have been to many demolition sites. There is little that volunteers with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program can do other than contact institutions such as the Red Cross, United Nations, and various non-government agencies. Still, we are welcomed by the villagers. They are grateful that we tell people at home what we are seeing and experiencing.

Violations are reported to the United Nations but, without the support of the UN member states, particularly those countries with veto power, nothing happens.

I wonder if pressure through peaceful measures such as economic sanctions would have more influence in bringing about more just measures.

Last week I visited one of the several Bedouin communities that have experienced demolitions and forced displacement. It was just outside of the community many of us know as "Bethany," which is now called Al-'Eizariya. The bulldozers arrived at 4:00 am, accompanied by military guards who closed the roads so there would be no witnesses. Three of the Bedouin homes were demolished leaving many people homeless. Sometimes our presence acts as a "protective presence" in these communities. But most demolitions happen at night or very early in the morning when there are no witnesses such as journalists and internationals.

Bedouin people are particularly vulnerable but are not the only ones suffering. In December we attended two demolitions, and in January there were eleven.

People are suffering and have been suffering for three or four generations. I pray that we who are aware will be willing to stand up and speak for justice—for all people.

The Rev. Diane Tait-Katerberg is the Clerk of the Presbytery of Westminster in British Columbia. She provides pulpit supply and acts as an Interim Moderator, as needed, in the Presbytery. Diane participated in the 2011 KAIROS Palestine trip led by the Rev. Noel Gordon.

The EAPPI, a program of the World Council of Churches, is based on the premise that both Israelis and Palestinians are affected by the occupation, violence, and human rights abuses. An international presence of peace advocates helps diffuse the situation and creates an environment for engagement of both Israelis and Palestinians working together for peace and human dignity. Ecumenical Accompaniers place an emphasis on advocacy initiatives when they return home. Currently, there are 23 countries that participate in the EAPPI. To date, six Presbyterians have been accepted to serve on the EAPPI in different placements.

Gordon Timber
Palestine and Israel
The Man in the Middle, December 15

In writing this blog, two titles came to mind: "The power of one" and "Man in the middle." Both apply to an elderly Palestinian farmer/ shepherd, who lives alone on his plot of land close to the Palestinian city of Yatta. He lives alone because his wife and family are fearful of the continuing harassment of Israelis ("settlers"), who have set up an illegal community on the hillside above him. His farm is adjacent to a very rough road leading further down the hillside to a Palestinian village. Hence the descriptions of him as "one man caught in the middle."

I was impressed by his bravery and his perseverance. It is not an easy thing to stand alone against a group of people, who keep finding new ways to make his life difficult. Stone throwing, loud verbal abuse, and sporadic night-time raids on his farm buildings, crops, and animals continue even after his water cistern and water pipes have been destroyed.

His perseverance comes from knowing that this farm has been in his family for generations. He has a right to be where he is. If he were to leave his property, even temporarily, the nearby squatters/settlers would claim it as "abandoned property," take possession of it, and close off the road access to the Palestinian village below. All this would be utterly possible and predictable because Israel has imposed full military occupation on the countryside (a designation known as "Area C"). The long-term intent is to move Palestinians out by making their lives so miserable that they will "choose" to leave. Israeli settlers will then move in.

Abu is a living declaration of the same kind of determination of civil rights advocates in the American south, who marched and sang that they would "not be moved." He also reminds me of a teaching point from the Biblical story in Genesis 18 in which the recognition of the "righteous" few brings God's saving action.

It is a privilege for our team of ecumenical accompaniers to provide protective presence for Abu by staying overnight with him in his stone hut home and by so doing, clearly declare to his neighbours that he is indeed a righteous and honourable man and that he is not alone.

The Rev. Gordon Timbers retired as the minister of Unionville Presbyterian Church in Unionville, Ontario, in 2014. That same year, he joined the PCC mission study tour to Israel and Palestine, in response to the invitation of the KAIROS Palestine document to "come and see." In December 2015, Gordon began a three-month placement with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).

A Guiding Hand

by Maureen E Kowal

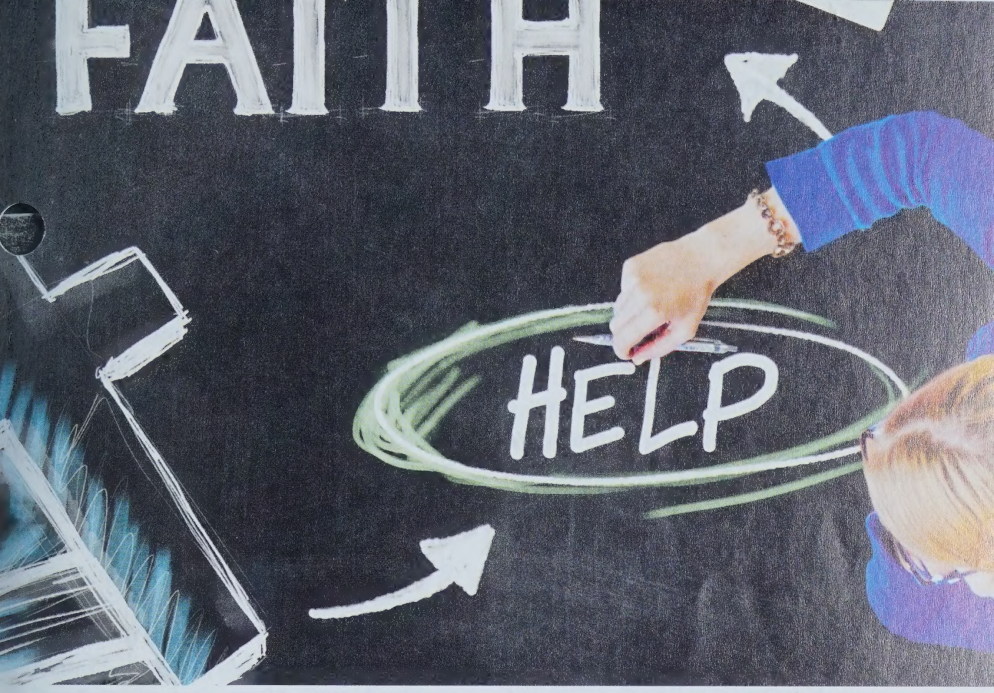
A guiding hand
A warm voice, a hand on my shoulder
Sometimes I am unsure
Is this what I should do?
Is this what I need to say?
I have a mentor
A guiding hand, a warm voice
On the telephone.
In a written note.
Sometimes tears fill my eyes.
Sometimes words fail to come.
Then in a smile, in a word,
in a guiding hand,
God's love flows through.

WMS ... Did You Know?

In early January, the WMS started something new. The WMS launched their new outreach, WTW (Women to Women), and also the outreach website, The Hub. We hope that The Hub will be a place where women can come together in cyberspace, from across Canada (and perhaps globally) and share ideas and be in solidarity with each other.

This idea did not come overnight. The WMS struggled with how to reach out to women in our church for many years. By the grace of God, we have finally received the vision to reach out to women—that would be part of our mission. For over a hundred years, the WMS served God and the Presbyterian Church by doing mission, sending missionaries to many parts of the world and also in Canada. They gave in resources, time, and energy to the mission work of our church. But today we have come to a time in our history where much of the mission work is being done by other mission arms of the church; the WMS continues in mission by supporting the church's missions, but we have stopped sending missionaries over 40 years ago.

Today, our membership is declining because the faithful members are aging and new members are not joining as quickly. Also,



younger women don't seem to find what they need in an organization like the WMS. We have heard so often how much the church appreciates the WMS; the younger women have also said how much they appreciate and respect what the WMS does, but they see the WMS as their mothers' or grandmothers' organization and not for them.

This challenge has been before the WMS for several decades, but not much was done to change the status quo. Recently, we realized that we had to do outreach ministry to women before we could grow as an organization. In our denomination, many churches and national arms of the church, like PWS&D and International Ministries, do mission but nobody is doing ministry with the women of our church. Looking at our global partners, many of them have a national women's organization (or a women's desk) in their church—however The Presbyterian Church in Canada is one of the few that does not. The WMS is the closest to a national women's organization in the PCC. So, we are probably the best organization to do outreach ministry to the women of our church.

We also realized that the best way to reach out to women of all ages is through social media; that is the reality of being a small national organization in a geographically large country. From that end, we are hopeful and optimistic about The HUB, that it will serve and minister to the women of our church into the long future.

And, this is just the beginning!

Presbyterial

London Presbyterial held their Mission Day on October 15 at Duff Presbyterian, Largie ON, with the theme, Where Are We. After refreshments, registration, and a sing-a-long, President Valerie Shaw constituted the meeting with prayer, and we recited the WMS Purpose.

Lynda Drummelsmith, our guest speaker, spoke about her experience at General Assembly in June 2015. Then, Juanita Coventry, Eva Roberts, and Joan Bayce led us in worship discussing, "where we are going." They encouraged us to follow adventurous living with God as our leader, just like the disciples who followed Jesus.

After Mildred Grieg gave the courtesies, we sang Be Present at our Table Lord, and then we enjoyed a beautiful lunch.

~Elaine Brown

Maitland Presbyterial held their annual meeting on January 25 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Wingham with the theme, Making God's Mission our Mission.

Co-President Nancy MacIntrye opened the meeting and the Rev. Peggy Kinsman, Interim Moderator at St. Andrew's, welcomed the women.

Our guest speaker, Mary Jane Bisset spoke from Luke 4:18–19, where Jesus quoted from the prophet Isaiah about what the Spirit would anoint the Messiah to do and explained how God's mission would be fulfilled in him. God's mission for the Messiah became Jesus' mission. Jesus' followers identified with him because he came to live among them. She shared about a mission trip that went to help build a church in Guatemala that she was a participated in. The Guatemalans appreciated that the team from Goderich came down

Maitland Presbyterial Executive

Mary Jane Bisset, guest speaker

and worked among them. Just as Jesus lived and worked among the people, this group from Goderich was able to work among the people. As God's mission became Jesus' mission, so we should make God's mission our mission. We need the Spirit to go alongside us to do our mission work of helping others, as we live and work among these people.

The Ladies' Auxiliary of St. Andrew's served a delicious lunch, and the business portion of the meeting followed. The Rev. Peggy Kinsman installed the new executive.

Lanark-Renfrew Presbyterial met for their annual meeting in Renfrew on January 23. President, Mary-Lynn McConnachie, opened the meeting with prayer and the WMS purpose. The Rev. Alison Sharpe welcomed everyone and Joan Hilliard gave a brief history of the Renfrew church.

Mary-Lynn then led the devotions, Are you Winterized? Keep out the cold, avoid the icicles of a cold attitude, prevent the devastating effects of a blizzard and escape the Jack Frost of depression with daily devotions. In her winter survival kit was non-perishable food (memorize scripture as food from the Lord); a cozy blanket (fellowship with others to keep warm); bottled water (Christ is the living water); candles and flashlight (listen to God's guidance). To conclude, the poem, 'Tis Winter Now' was read in unison.

Betty Hardie and Margaret Sams let prayers for International, national, and local concerns. In Memoriam remembered Millie Bowes of Almonte. A Closure Service was conducted for Lochwinnoch, Bristol, Ross, Cobden, McDonalds Corners, Perth and Westport of the Lanark-Renfrew Presbyterial.

A Bible study called, Let it Go, followed. Various ladies read scriptures stating we must let go of the past, of anxieties, of bitterness, of unhealthy relationships, and of desires of the flesh. Letting go allows healing, faith to grow, and movement forward. The study began and ended with singing verses from the hymn, Will you Come and Follow Me?

Then beautiful songs were sung by Mary Etmanksi prior to our lunch,

Our afternoon speaker, Joy Holmes, showed a power-point presentation of her trip to the Dominican Republic in 2015. Joy and her husband, Pastor Chris Holmes, left Toronto with six hockey bags full of goods for children plus 400 Spanish Bibles. Joy's gift was in teaching the children and adults to do crafts.

Synodical president, Irene Nesbitt, installed the officers for 2016 and Mary-Lynn extended courtesies and closed the meeting with the benediction.

~Vivian Young

The Presbyterian Woman of Faith Award

Often unrecognized, yet significantly important, women have been present since the beginning of the Christian story. They have quietly answered God's call to mission and ministry both within the church and in their communities.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Order of Diaconal Ministries, and the Women's Missionary Society have established the Woman of Faith Awards to recognize the work of women within our church. It was an honour to present the first awards to six women (two posthumously) at the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering in 2014. It was exciting to share the stories of their understanding of Christ's ministry on earth.

Once again at the Women's Gathering event in May 2017, the Presbyterian Woman of Faith Awards will be presented. Women will be honoured because of a specific accomplishment, faithful service, or a lifetime of achievement. You may also want to honour a woman, who has passed away, by making a donation "In Remembrance" as no posthumous awards will be given.

The Presbyterian
Woman of Faith
Awards
Do you know a woman in The Presbyterian Church in Canada who has made a significant contribution to the life of her church or community?

This award is given to women, who are nominated by the church at large. Do you know a woman in The Presbyterian Church in Canada who is making a significant difference in the life of your church and/or community who should be recognized by the national church? It's easy to nominate her. Ask your AMS/WMS group, Session, Presbytery/Presbyterial, or Synod/Synodical to support the nomination. Go to presbyterian.ca/woman-of-faith-awards to obtain a nomination form. You will need to write a short biography of the woman and a brief description of her accomplishments.

Recipients of the award are chosen by nomination only. Our hope is to have nominations from churches across the country. The Woman of Faith Awards committee considers all nominations and decides the award recipients. Nominations must be received by November 30, 2016.

For more information, visit presbyterian.ca/woman-of-faith-awards, or email wofa@presbyterian.ca or contact Liz Brewer 1-800-619-7301 ext. 248.

Remembering

Anne Gardiner
Mary McKenzie Auxiliary,
Valetta Presbyterian,
Merlin ON

Beatrice Hearn
Stamford Presbyterian
Church,
Niagara Falls Ontario

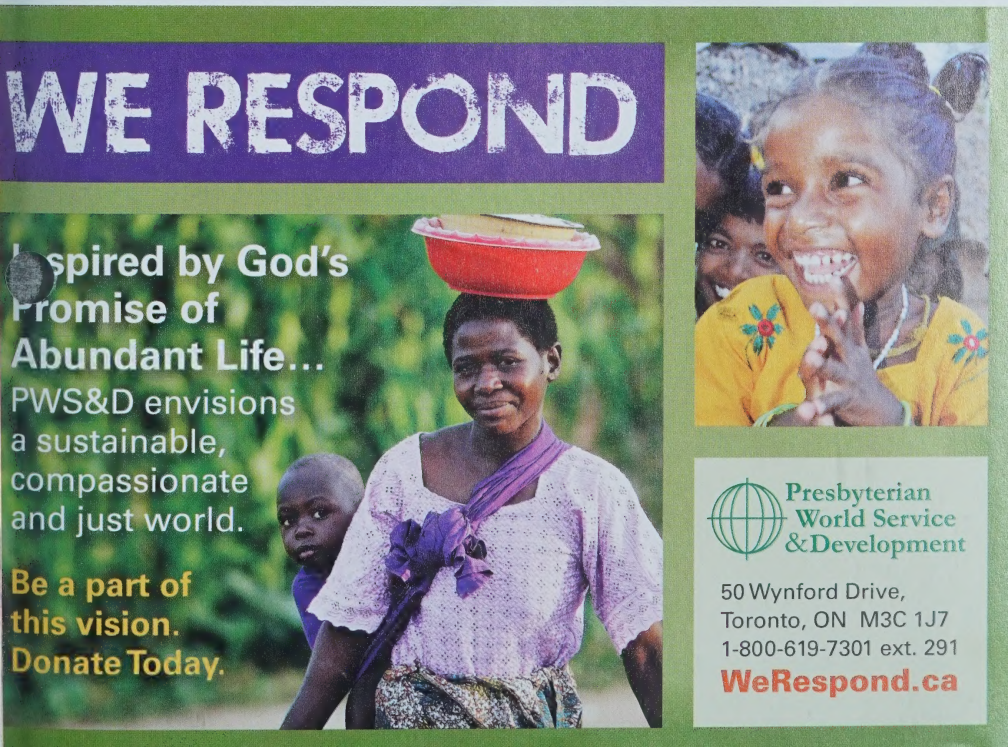
Carol Packham
St. Paul's,
Hamilton ON

Circulation News

Thank you to all those who have taken the time to check their address on their subscription label, or that have checked in with new subscribers in their group. Please notify me of any errors as soon as possible, so we can be certain that your *Glad Tidings* arrives as quickly as possible.

It's not too late for new subscriptions! Although most of our subscriptions run January to December, subscribers can join at any point during the year.

All circulation questions and changes should be sent to:
Gladtidings@presbyterian.ca or 1-800-619-7301, ext 323.


WE RESPOND
Inspired by God's Promise of Abundant Life...
PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.
Be a part of this vision. Donate Today.
Presbyterian World Service &Development
50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291
WeRespond.ca

Mission Awareness Sunday

April 24, 2016

Theme: *Learning and Reaching out Together in Love*

by: Rev. Lara Scholey

The worship resource for Mission Awareness Sunday has been emailed out. If you have not received the material, you can get a copy of the litany, sermon, and children's story at www.wmspcc.ca/mission-awareness-sunday or email amckeown@presbyterian.ca (the resource can be emailed or mailed out).

For more information
contact
Alexis McKeown
800-619-7301
ext. 319
amckeown@presbyterian.ca

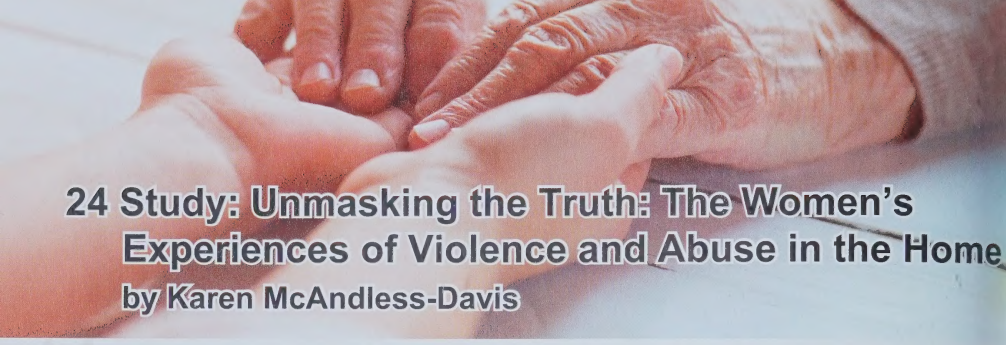
PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

May/June 2016

Knox House, Toronto ON



24 Study: Unmasking the Truth: The Women's Experiences of Violence and Abuse in the Home

by Karen McAndless-Davis

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

6 **Fellowship at Knox House**
by Samantha Mudiappahpillai and Rachel Schroots

10 **Driven by the Spirit of Church**
by Yuriy Derkach

14 **Where you are Welcome**
by W. Alex Bisset

18 **Trust at All Times**
by Colleen Wood

22 **It's Time for Justice**
by International Affairs Committee

35 **Lodestar**
by Olive Regina Anstice

36 **Mission In Action**

46 **Love found a way**
by Victoria Stirling

IN THE SOCIETY

40 **WMS ... Did You Know?**

42 **In the Society**

45 **Memorial**

47 **Remembering**

Glad Tidings

May/June 2016

Volume 92, No. 3

EDITOR: Colleen Wood

DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2016 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

Editorial: time of change

by Colleen Wood

Whether we like it or not, the times they are a changing. I think there is no greater time of change in life than for those in their late teens and early twenties. Certainly, this was a great time of change in my own life. I lived away from my family for the first time ever. I went from a school with just over 200 students in total, to a school where my first-year classes had double that number! I chose my major, and changed it, multiple times. I made new friends and lost old ones.

It was tough. I made some bad choices. I made some good choices. I left the church. And, I returned to the church. It was a time of change. It still is, for young adults today. For many, this is the first time that they move away from their families (though many still live at home for financial or emotional reasons).

For some, it is the first time where the choices before them seem endless.

And one of those choices is faith. For those who have stayed in our churches throughout their high school years, this is the time that many sadly chose to leave the church. The startling reality is that the majority of the young people who grew up in churches leave. As a mother of two children, it saddens me. I know how my faith

Think about a young person in your life.

nurtures me, calms me, inspires me, educates me, and saves me. I want that for my children. It is the reason I pray for them often. It is the reason I talk about my faith. It is the reason that we are involved in Christian camping. It is one of the reasons we worship in Christian community.

There is no magic to keeping children in the church. Certainly a few things help to keep young adults in the church like camp, adult mentors, parental example, Christian friends, and mission trips, but there is no guarantee. So, I continue to pray. I pray that my example of faith will be followed by my kids, and I pray that I might be better at keeping my grumbles about the church to myself. I pray not only for my kids, but for their friends, current and future. I pray that our camps and youth ministries will thrive and survive.

In this month's *Glad Tidings*, you will read about some great ministries that allow young people to continue to live their faith. You will read about Knox House, which allows young students to live their faith in community. You will also read about The Presbyterian Young People's Society that has a long history of providing leadership opportunities for young people. You will also read about the campus ministry at Algonquin College. Today, I encourage you to take a moment to think about a young person in your life, maybe a child, grandchild, niece or nephew, or a young person from your church. Say a pray for them as they face this time of change, and pray that they will continue to know the love of God and of Christian community.

The startling reality is that the majority of the young people who grew up in churches leave.

Ways you can support a young person in their faith:

1. Pray for them.
2. If they are a student, send them a care package around exam time. Consider sending a package or two of gum, a small gift certificate for a coffee shop, and a few sweets, along with an encouraging letter to let them know others are supporting them.
3. Connect with them. With email and facebook it is easy to stay connected with young people even when they have moved for school or work. If you see that they are having a bad day, send them an encouraging email. Have they recently had a success? Send them a congratulatory email.
4. Let them know about Christian events in their area. If they are at college or university, provide them with information about their local chaplaincy or campus Christian group. Also, let them know about our own, Canada Youth event which includes a young adult track. (http://presbyterian.ca/cy2016) If they are interested in attending, offer to help them with fundraising.
5. If you have recently had a number of young people graduate from your youth ministry, host an event for those who are home over Christmas. It can be a casual gathering with coffee and refreshments so they can share their experiences and pray together.
6. For those young adults who are still in your congregation, involve them in the life of the church. Consider their gifts, skills, and available time, and find a place for them to serve.

Fellowship at Knox House

by Samantha Mudiappahpillai and Rachel Schroots

Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto, is situated across the street from the University of Toronto and walking distance from at least four other universities or colleges. Some 40 years ago, Knox acquired the house beside the church and through the years has offered accommodation for students not only in need of housing, but also for those hoping to live among peers eager to explore what it means to be a student and follow Jesus.

Residence community offers a unique environment for students to work out their faith and understanding of Jesus. When I took over the direction of Knox House five years ago, the residence was not in good shape, though. Years of maintenance neglect were becoming more and more obvious and inadequate staffing over a few years was revealing itself in a variety of conflicts and miscommunications with residents. In addition to this, our church leadership had begun future vision planning for the church property. "Is Knox House a sustainable operation?" was among the many questions being asked. However, major decisions

were a few years away yet. In my young adult life, I was inspired by young Christians in the western world focussed on forming a movement called New Monasticism. I had longed for a place to work out my faith through intentional Christian community. I had so much hope for what Knox House could be! Following the nudge of the Spirit, I resolved to see Knox House revive and become as fruitful a student Christian community as possible, while the house exists.

Three years of prayer and hard work later, God called a great couple in to staff the house and launch a new season of student discipleship at Knox House. For two years now, life at Knox House has been shaped by an ancient Christian tradition called a Rule of Life. The Rule of Life invites and involves students in weekly morning prayer, weekly home-cooked dinners shared with students and young adults from the community, Sunday worship, and a bi-weekly discipleship time where residents and staff share and encourage each other through stories of their experiences of faith and following Jesus. In the following paragraphs, one of our current residents, Rachel Schroots, shares her experience of living the Rule of Life in community.

As uncertain as we still are about the future of Knox House, I am very certain that Knox will continue to work out what it looks like to invite students to experience Christ-shaped community for many years to come. For now, I am grateful to see that Knox House continues to be a place of Gospel-centred community, hospitality, friendship, discipleship, and celebration for students desiring the beauty of the Kingdom that Jesus invites us to live in.

"All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.... They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved." Acts 2:42–43, 46–47 (NLT)

Overlooking a busy main street, I sit on my couch and watch as streetcars rumble by, cars speed along, and many pedestrians cross the street, most heading to the university. This grand, old house looms on a street corner, next to a large and rather impressive church. This house has great big windows, creaky floors, and a bizarre floor plan that only hints at the life that has occupied this space over the years. Currently, in Knox House, there resides nine students along with the coolest married couple you will ever meet. This duo oversees house details and ensures that we

show up for 7 a.m. prayer every Wednesday (no easy feat!). We all come from diverse backgrounds and places, and the trajectories of our lives point us in vastly different directions. And yet, it is at Knox House that our paths converge. To be fair, the building itself doesn't deserve much credit for this marvellous feat; rather God does for it is He who created this beautiful thing called "fellowship."

The Biblical understanding of fellowship is profound, and it has moved me to see the depth to which God has created us to be in relationship. An excellent article by J Keathley states, "Fellowship means we belong to each other in a relationship because we share together the common life and enabling grace of Jesus Christ.... Without God's means of fellowship, we can't have true Christian fellowship. What we end up with is mere religiosity... (and) social interchange." While there may be a strong community within a house of people living together, it is our relationship with God that develops the fullness of relationships with others. Keathley further writes, "The ultimate goal (of fellowship) is to build up and enrich each other in the things of Christ that we may all together experience the sufficiency of His life and tune our lives into His."

Community is the collective living of messy, broken, and redeemed lives together, honestly sharing burdens and joys, revelations, and struggles. Dietrich Bonheoffer reflects on Christian community sharing that, "Because God has united us in one body with other Christians in Jesus Christ long before we entered into common life with them, we enter into that life together with other Christians, not as those who make demands, but as those who thankfully receive." By merely living and sharing space in Knox House, I am continuously reminded of the love and presence of Christ.

At Knox House, there are rules of life that have shaped our fellowship. Every other week we have a time of discipleship, where we meet as a whole house. Last semester, we shared parts of our faith story, and this semester we are sharing how our work, school, or other interest intersects with faith. Every Wednesday morning, we meet at 7 a.m. and read a devotional by Phil Reinders. We read scripture, share thoughts, and pray not only for each other but for the community and the world.

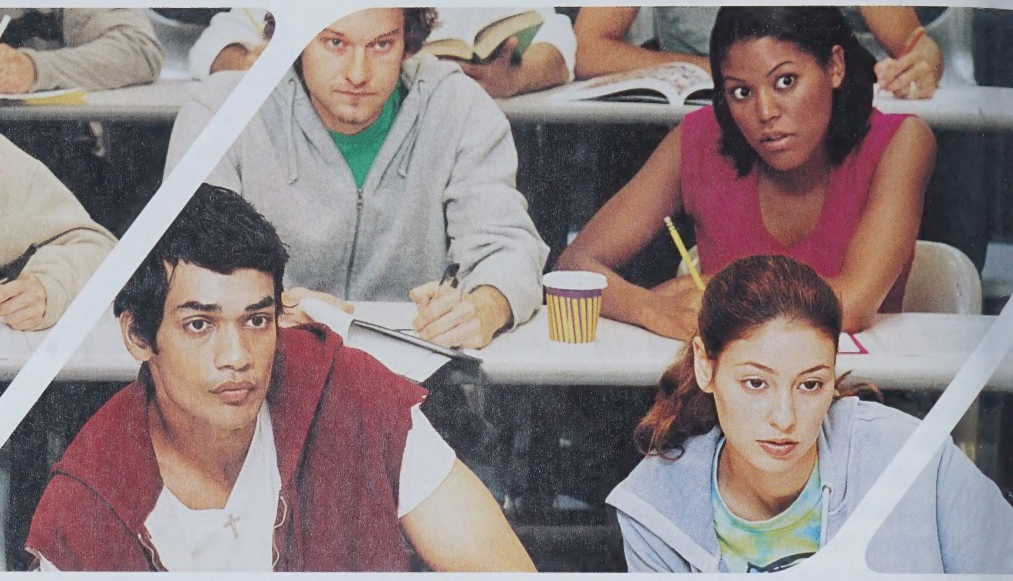
Then there are our Friday night meals, when we hang out and eat food together. All are invited to God's table and in turn we invite others to share in our weekly meal. "Love Feast" is an opportunity for us at Knox House to practise hospitality. A way to a young adult's heart is not only through the stomach, but also in time spent connecting with others. The university student's schedule is often sporadic, with late hours at a library or early morning classes;

eating a meal together becomes improbable. But finding time in our busy lives, taking an hour or two to eat a meal together in the same space, allows us to catch up on people's weeks and meet newcomers.

It's not always easy. At times I don't want 20 people in my living room. The kitchen's sometimes a mess. Sometimes I am just tired, but in faithfulness God has shown his grace and goodness in the act of hospitality. A blog post from Boundless.org says, "I think it's in this everyday hospitality that we can learn the deeper meaning of the Word. God calls us to hospitality—not just in the sense of having people over, but of allowing people in. I think it is when we begin to allow people into our lives—into the messy room or the dirty kitchen, into the good and the bad of our lives, the happy days and the sad times—that we learn the deeper meaning of a hospitable spirit."

This idea of letting people in can be practised not only in hospitality, but also in the day to day living with each other. Knox House is not perfect because we who live in it are not perfect; there are many times when it's easier to close the door to our messy rooms or lives. It is easy to take the person in the next room for granted, but while we serve those outside the home, we are also called to love and live in unity. That is why I love my apartment's monthly 'housemate dates'; attempts to intentionally connect despite busy schedules. These are typically comprised of breakfast and an hour or two of sharing. We reflect on the past month and look forward to the coming one. We define ways to support each other and plan opportunities to have fun together!

There are many reasons why Knox House is more than just a well-situated place to live for eight months. It is convenient for it takes me 43.5 seconds to walk from my front door to a chair in the sanctuary of the church. And it's enjoyable to live with fun people who enjoy cooking and tea just as much as I do. The living experience at Knox House shows me in different ways and seasons of my life who Christ is through the fellowship of this community.



Driven by the Spirit of Christ

by Yuriy Derkach, Chaplain

Whether we are studying in school, going to work, travelling the world, building relationships at home with family or outside with friends or strangers, the Christian believers are called to seek the Spirit of God in everything that we do, say, or think. For only in the Spirit of Christ, can we actually live, walk, breathe, and realize ourselves in this life and in the life eternal. Without the Holy Spirit, we can struggle and stumble, and can become very miserable, unhappy, angry, and fruitless. With the Holy Spirit, we come to life, to the reality and presence of God, we bear fruits of joy, tranquility, compassion, and generosity.

Who would not want to experience and live out the true, full and enriched life, full of love, mercy, and abundance from above? Yet many people choose to live mediocre lives often because they have not experienced the love of Christ, and unfortunately did not have enough good examples of Christ-like people in their lives. Many, in the world today, are pulled in to follow the spirit of the world rather than the Spirit of God.

When students come to college, it can be a very exciting time for

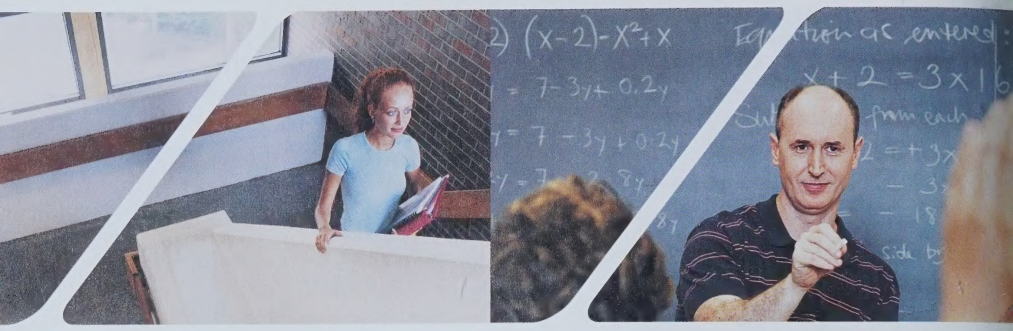
them. Finally, they are away from home and get the freedom to do whatever they want. It can also be a very confusing time and sometimes even dangerous. This is the time when young people are called to realize themselves not only academically but also spiritually. This is the time to figure out not only what one wants to do in life, but why, and how, and for what bigger purpose? And depending on the decisions and choices they make at this stage, their whole life can unravel. Campus Ministry at Algonquin College helps to address these and many other questions.

We are an interdenominational community serving the personal and spiritual needs of all Algonquin College students and staff regardless of their background. Students gather for prayer and fellowship, Bible study, individual counselling, and spiritual reflection. We also meet to discuss various issues that are relevant to our walk with Christ. Campus Ministers are on hand to give support, to pray, and to counsel in difficult times. Whether students have a strong faith, or are simply exploring, or they just want to connect with others, Campus Ministry is here for them.

At Campus Ministry, we focus our ministry around the study of the Bible, breaking of the bread at our weekly Eucharist, fellowship, and praying for one another. Like the early disciples, we try to devote ourselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. (Acts 2:42) What is the purpose of our coming together and studying the instructions of Christ and his apostles? At Campus Ministry, we are striving to learn, understand, and follow God's will.

At Campus Ministry, we help to equip students for any challenges awaiting them not only in school but also in their daily lives and the future that is awaiting them. We come together daily to continue to grow in our faith and learn God's Word, and strive to apply it to everything we are and what we do. One day, many of the students will look back at their college time, and say, "This was the time when I deepened my faith in the Lord, when I came to know Him more intimately, and sanctified by His Spirit, I became a true follower."

Here are what some of our students have to say about their experience of Campus Ministry at Algonquin College: *"Even though I was*



brought up in a Hindu family, I've always loved Jesus from a young age, but I did not meet the right person for a long time to guide me in Christian teachings. Once I came to Canada to study at Algonquin College, I was guided to come to the Spiritual Centre and was blessed to meet wonderful Christian people serving at Campus Ministry, who helped me a lot and guided me and pointed me in the right direction towards God's teachings, towards Christ, the living Word. Now every time I am down or feel stressed, I come to Campus Ministry for counselling or prayer with a chaplain or for Bible Studies and all the worries and stress disappear right away. I already see many good changes in my life and I am grateful to the Lord for that."

Anand Kumar,
Interactive Media
Design

"I believe that Christian ministry needs to be in colleges and universities around the world. Christian ministry provides a variety of things, for example, spiritual support, crisis support, and teachings about the Lord's Word. In today's society we need to hear about God's Word and pray for the world. From my perspective, everyone needs someone to talk to and Christian ministry provides these services."

Emmanuela Nazaire, General Arts
and Science Pre-Nursing

"As a student and individual, my faith and journey with Christ is important to me. It has been encouraging for me to know that this faith presence exists at the college, and the access that students, including myself, have to its services, are a blessing during the transition period of our life with God."

Christopher Onis, Police Foundation

WE RESPOND

Inspired by God's Promise of Abundant Life...

PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.

Be a part of this vision. Donate today.

Presbyterian World Service & Development

50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291
WeRespond.ca

WHERE YOU ARE WELCOME

by W. Alex Bisset

The Presbyterian Young Peoples' Society (PYPS) has a long history in our denomination. Many people now active in our church remember attending PYPS events at some point in their faith journey.

In the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda (CNOB), responsibility for providing oversight to the Synod PYPS group has traditionally been a part of the work of the Synod Youth Ministry Consultant but in the Fall of 2013, the Synod decided that it would not hire a replacement for the Synod's youth consultant, the Rev. Jeff Crawford. Although this was a difficult decision, there were many contributing factors, including reduced funding from the Women's Missionary Society and changes in the regional staffing model that were approved by the General Assembly. Some of the workload from the position was assigned to Tori Smit, the Synod's Regional Minister for Faith Formation, and the responsibility for the synod's PYPS group was taken over by the Synod

I assist ... I give advice ... I advocate ... I serve ... I listen ... I connect ...

Alex Bisset

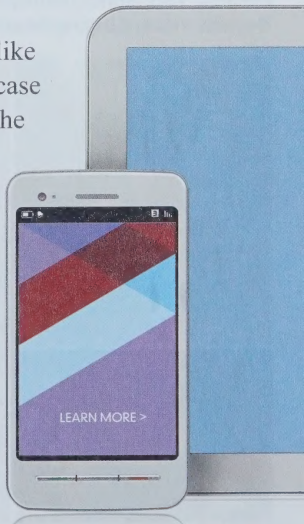
Camp Board. At that time, it was believed by the Synod Executive that the work of supporting PYPS would be performed either by the camps' full-time, year-round staff or by part-time staff that would be hired for this purpose. However, when that proved not to be the case, I agreed to take on the PYPS piece as part of my role as Camp Board convener.

The CNOB PYPS group, which is one of only two active Synod PYPS organizations in the church, runs two or three weekend-long events each year for youth between the ages of 14 and 25 (Atlantic Canada has PAYS: Presbyterian Atlantic Youth Synod). These events are planned by the executive committee, which is made up of 8–10 people from the PYPS group itself. The executive sets a theme for the event and invites someone, usually a minister or other leader in the denomination, to be the speaker. Most recently, we have talked about themes like Our Role in the World (with the Rev. Michael Burns) and Living for the Well-being of God's Creation (with the Rev. Kristine O'Brien).

The executive also identifies a mission focus or project for the weekend, which is sometimes related to a local mission or outreach activity in the host congregation. At recent events, for example, we have packed outreach bags for the Presbytery of East Toronto's ARISE Ministry and learned about Project Ploughshares from the PCC's intern with that organization. Members of the executive find a location that is willing to host the weekend, and lay out the schedule, with each member of the executive taking responsibility for one or more activities that foster group spirit, encourage spiritual growth, or are just plain fun. Two executive members plan worship, which happens at various times through the weekend; and then at the event they find volunteers who are willing to participate in worship by reading scriptures or prayers. The executive designs promotional materials and circulates them, accepts the registration, and does its own bookkeeping. Each weekend, from conception to closing, is planned or led by youth, for youth.

So what do I do? Where does a minister in his mid-40s fit into all this youth-led programming?

Years ago, PYPS had someone called an "adult advisor." I don't like that term, in this case at least, because the people I work with on the executive committee are adults. They don't need a grown-up to babysit them or hold their hands.



And so, over the past couple of years, we have changed the title for my role to "mentor," or sometimes, "clergy mentor." I do give advice, on things like how to follow the PCC's Leading With Care policy, and I help suggest churches that might be good locations for events and people who might be good speakers. I assist the co-presidents as they navigate the courts of the church, introducing them to presbytery clerks and other people who can help spread the word about PYPS events. I advocate for PYPS at meetings of the Camp Board and the Synod Executive.

But I also engage with the members of the executive committee and those who attend PYPS events on an individual basis. I serve as a reference when they are applying for scholarships or jobs. I listen when they want to talk about the issues that concern them, issues like faith, of course, but also issues that might at first not seem related to faith, such as relationships and sexual orientation, family dynamics, and school work. Since PYPSers are a scattered bunch, I connect with as many of them as I can using social media, and try to follow up with people whose posts indicate that they are having a bad day, week, or month.

Over the past two years, I have come to believe that PYPS is an incredibly important institution in our church. The leadership opportunity that it offers to young people is without parallel, and the growth that occurs in participants who choose to become leaders in the group is phenomenal.

But that is not all that PYPS offers. Admittedly, it is a far smaller organization than it once was. Winter Weekend, which is held in February, has attracted just under 30 participants

Photos: Top, right: Teamwork at High Ropes, May Camp, 2015
Bottom, right: Singing hearts out in the Riff-off, Winter Weekend 2015

May Camp 2015

over the past two years, while May Camp, which was held at Glen Mhor Camp in Muskoka in 2015 drew over 50. It is not surprising that as our churches grow smaller and have fewer youth, there will be fewer people at youth events like the ones PYPS runs. However, it is precisely as our churches grow smaller and have fewer youth and youth organizations that PYPS becomes even more important than they once were. As more and more of the young adults who attend our churches find that there are not many of their own age group in their congregation, attending events with other people their age who go to other Presbyterian congregations in the presbytery or the synod can be very beneficial.

And the CNOB PYPS group has something else to offer, other than just a place where young Presbyterians can meet other young Presbyterians. It is a group where all are welcomed and accepted. I am constantly reminded when I watch my friends in action that PYPS is a place where all can find a home. It doesn't matter if you're awkward or eccentric, hyperactive or shy, depressed or anxious, confused or confident, popular or isolated. You are welcomed, and treated as what you are: a child of God, and a friend. And I am convinced that this kind of experience is incredibly important for faith formation at any age, but especially in late adolescent and early adult years.

When I was young, I wasn't involved in PYPS. Now I am and I am grateful to God and to the Synod that I have been given this opportunity to become involved with the organization now.

The Rev. W. Alex Bisset began attending WMS meetings with his mother at a very early age. Alex is minister of Westminster and Riverdale Presbyterian Churches in Toronto. He also serves as convener of the CNOB Synod Camp Board and is the Clerk of the Presbytery of East Toronto. He is married to the Rev. Dr. Emily Bisset.

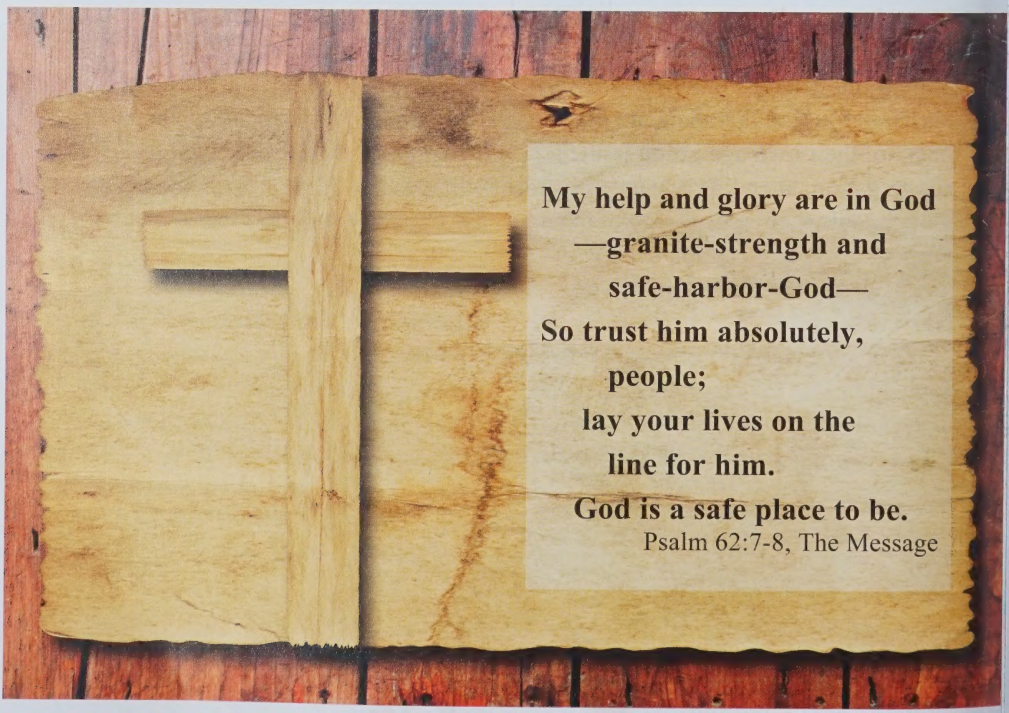
Trust at All Times

by Colleen Wood

I have been thinking a lot about the church these days. As I read The Presbyterian Record and watch the chatter on Facebook regarding issues facing our denomination, I am saddened. I fear that our church may not survive. If we do survive, I fear that friends and entire congregations may be lost. It saddens me.

I also look at my life these days, and feel the chaos of being a parent of two children. With hockey season behind us (which I do love), I breathe a sigh of relief that we will have a little more time on the weekends. But, there are still birthday parties, family commitments, work, soccer, meetings, and yes, even church to add to our calendar. All good things, but sometimes, it all feels a little overwhelming.

For those of you who are retired, I know many of you live incredibly busy lives. I call and get the familiar answering machine. When setting up WMS Council



meetings, finding a date that everyone can make even six months away is a challenge. And for those whose energy and health might be failing, there are other concerns and worries.

And, for many years, we have faced decline in our Women's Missionary Society groups. Members are tired and groups are closing. We say goodbye to many friends who are no longer able to attend due to failing health or who have passed away. These groups that have meant so much to us do not seem to be a priority to a younger generation. There is worry about the survival of our own groups, and the society as a whole.

Life can be a challenge. Life is busy. Life is hard. Change happens whether we want it to or not. Often, times are tough.

Take a few minutes in silence to reflect on some of the challenges you are facing in your life at this time.

Read: Psalm 62

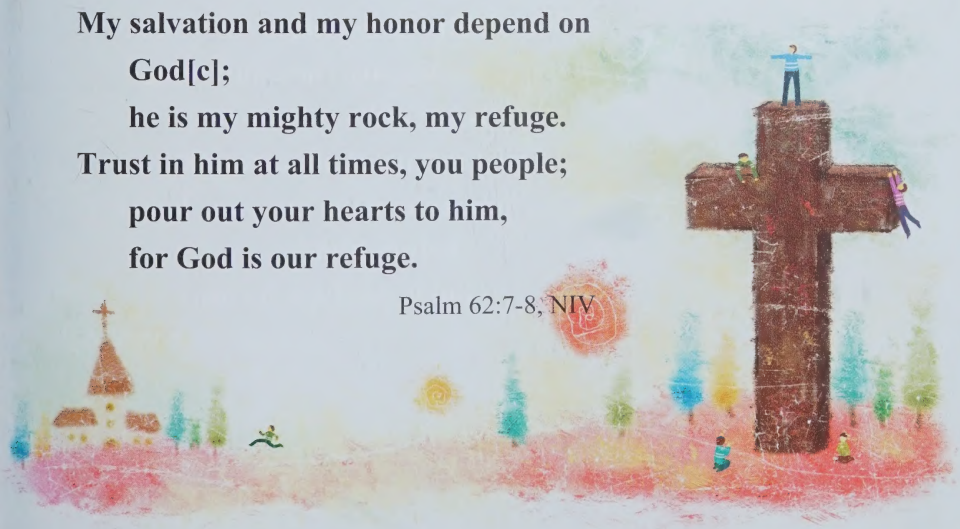
Take a few minutes to reflect on the names and descriptions for God in this passage.

The writer of this Psalm, David, sounds like he is going through some

Life can be a challenge. Life is busy. Life is hard.

My salvation and my honor depend on
God[c];
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge.

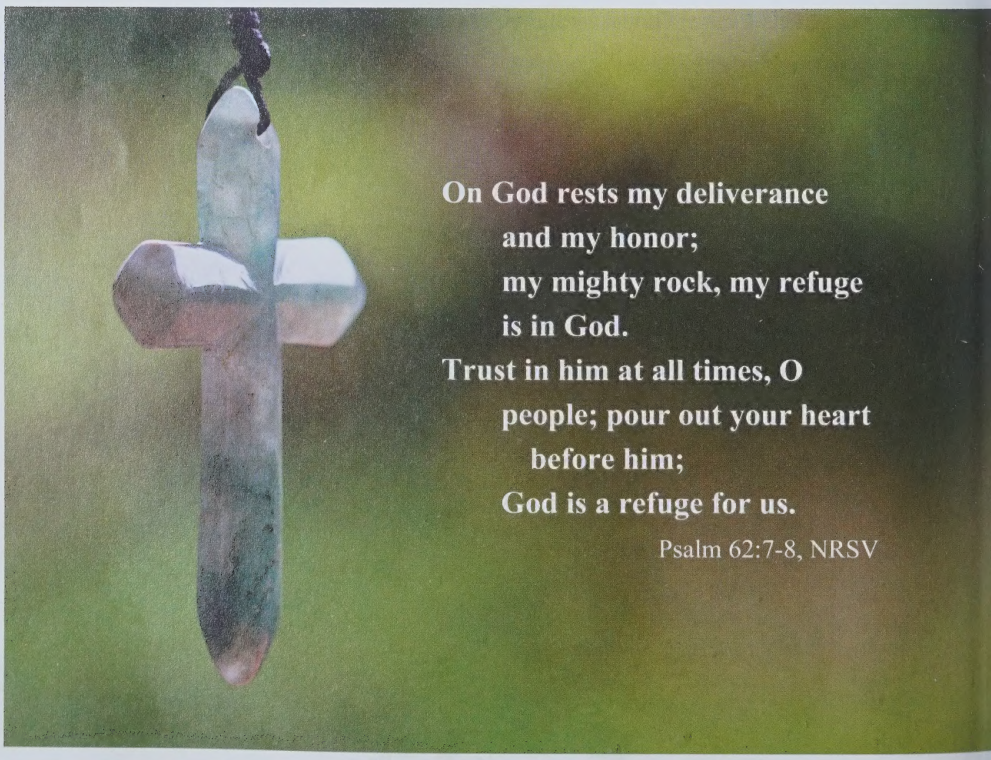
Psalm 62:7-8, NIV



challenges. The beauty of this Psalm is that the reason for his duress in unnamed, so each of us can name our own challenges as we read through this passage. We all face times of conflict, change, sorrow, or duress. It is in these times, that we have an even greater need for our God.

It is in times of uncertainty and busyness that we need the calm that only God can provide. In Psalm 62:1, we read: "For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation." Take a few moments to rest in silence with God. Let God's peace be with you as you forget your concerns and rest in God. If you are new to the practice of silence, it is sometimes helpful to have a saying you can repeat to help you maintain your focus on God alone. I like to slowly breathe as I repeat several times, "Be still and know that I am God." If I find myself distracted during my time of quiet, I will once again repeat this saying a few times to regain my focus on God.

As you end your time of silence, reflect on God as a rock or fortress. God is our solid rock. If you have ever tried to cross a small stream or river using small rocks to get across, you know the importance of choosing the solid rock. Some


On God rests my deliverance
and my honor;
my mighty rock, my refuge
is in God.
Trust in him at all times, O
people; pour out your heart
before him;
God is a refuge for us.
Psalm 62:7-8, NRSV

of the rocks are shaky, and if you put your trust in these rocks, you will likely end up falling into the stream. The same happens in this world, when we put out faith in things other than our God. We must choose to follow our unchanging God, the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. When we do this, we find our strength.

Take a few minutes to write down two or three of the challenges you are facing today. Think of how you have been managing these challenges. Have you been relying on shaky solutions or on God, your firm rock? Spend a few minutes praying about each of the challenges you have listed. After you have prayed for each challenge, take a moment again to be silent. Listen for God's voice. Listen for God's direction and/or his assurance. Listen to what God is saying to you at this time.

Finally, read Psalm 62:7–8 found in three different translations in this article. Copy or cut out the translation that most speaks to you. Post it where you will see it daily. Let it remind you to focus on God, and that God is with you at all times and in all circumstances.

Check out all the deals online at
presbyterian.ca/pcpotential

PC POTENTIAL

A new benefits and special offers program for PCC churches and members, helping you save time, money and resources.

IT'S TIME FOR JUSTICE

International Affairs Committee

2015, No. 4

"For the Lord your God...loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 10:18–19)

In the land where Paul found faith, and from where Christianity spread to the world, churches have become targets of bombardment and desecration. What began as peaceful calls for political reform by citizens of Syria has become a brutal conflict. The humanitarian situation is desperate. At least 200,000 people have died. Since the conflict began in March 2011, half the Syrian population has been displaced. Six-and-a-half million Syrians remain within its borders, but cannot go home and four million Syrians are refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and other countries.

The Church Responds

Through PWS&D we are responding to the emergency in Syria. Our partners are ACT Alliance and Canadian Foodgrains Bank

(CFGB). ACT Alliance has staff who provide psychological and educational support for children in refugee camps. CFGB provides food, shelter, hygiene kits and clothing to displaced people in Syria, and to refugees in Lebanon and Jordan.

Through International Ministries we have relationships with the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, the National Evangelical Church of Beirut and the Near East School of Theology (NEST). Dr. Sabra, Principal of NEST, says that Muslim-Christian dialogue builds relationships so that Christians and Muslims can live together in peace in Lebanon and in other countries in the Middle East.

What can you do?

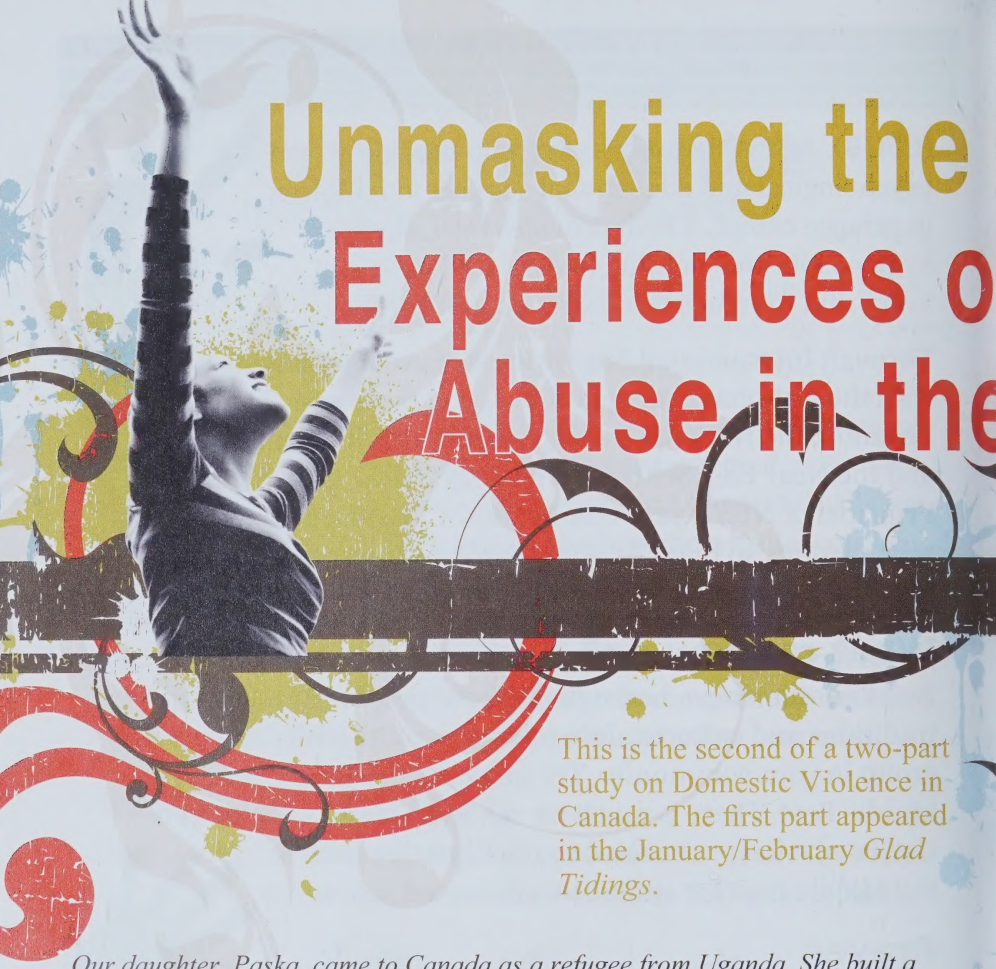
Build relationships. Learn more about people of other faith traditions and cultures. Join or start a multi-faith dialogue group in your community. Try to meet Christians from the Middle East. There is much we can learn from brothers and sisters who have witnessed to the Christian faith in the Middle East for almost two thousand years.

Prayer

Merciful God, hear the cries of the people of Syria torn apart by violence, civil war and terror. We pray for those uprooted, fleeing for safety and seeking peace. Empower and help Syria's neighbours in their care for refugees. Teach us how to live together in harmony, to respectfully dialogue and learn about other faith traditions and cultures. This we pray, in the name of the One who came to bring peace on earth. Amen.

The International Affairs Committee is mandated by General Assembly to monitor an draw the church's attention to international issues. Its report is on pp. 294-309 of the A&P 2015.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada



Unmasking the Experiences o Abuse in the

This is the second of a two-part study on Domestic Violence in Canada. The first part appeared in the January/February *Glad Tidings*.

Our daughter, Paska, came to Canada as a refugee from Uganda. She built a great life for herself here. She was bubbly, confident, and full of life. She earned two university degrees, married, and had three delightful children.

But unfortunately she was severely abused by her husband: financially, socially, physically, and in every other way. Of course, the abuse started slowly and there were many periods of "honeymoon" behaviour, so the whole situation was very confusing for Paska. We tried to help her to leave him but that was a complex decision for her to make.

Over the years, the abuse got worse. He did everything he could to cut her off from us. We noticed sad changes in her personality. Her confidence and self-esteem disappeared. She kept trying to please him, and thought it might be her fault, and that he would change. Finally, an assault occurred that was so bad five police officers attended the scene.

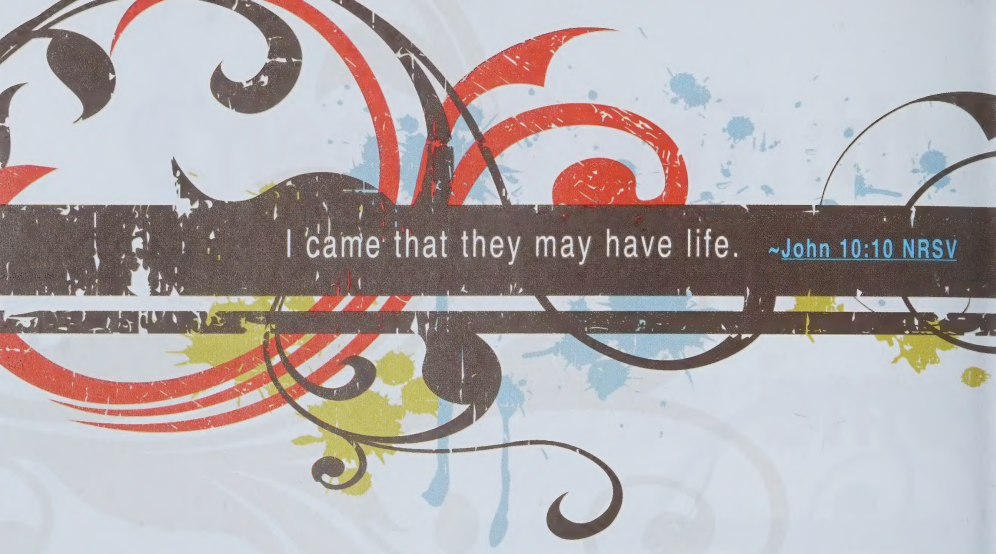
uth: The Women's Violence and Home

by Karen McAndless-Davis

When Paska made the courageous decision to end the relationship, my wife, Joyce, and I were shocked to discover that her husband would be granted joint custody of the children and they would live with him for 50% of the time! The system failed terribly to protect her or her children. What followed was six years and over $100,000 in legal fees as Paska tried to protect her children from their father.

She told me that being a refugee could not be compared to the abuse she experienced or the humiliation she was exposed to in court. It was awful to watch our daughter go through this after all she had suffered in her childhood. At times, she wanted to commit suicide. She said to me, "Dad, death would be easier." We so wished to take the pain away. Our reaction ranged between anger, at both the man and the system, and loving support for our daughter. I would never have understood the pain, suffering, and complexity of spousal abuse if we had not witnessed it in our own family.

The Rev. Dr. Glen Davis, Moderator of the 126th General Assembly



This quote highlights several important aspects of women's experiences of abuse. It exposes some of the horror of abuse—the human cost, not only to the woman, but also to her children and other family members. It also helps us to begin to realize that the abuse itself is not the only challenge the woman faces. There are huge social, financial, spiritual, and emotional impacts of abuse. Healing and rebuilding a life takes a long time. In this study, you will learn more about the experiences of women living with abuse and how you can make a difference.[1]

Opening Prayer

Compassionate God, be with us today as we gather to continue our learning on this challenging topic. Help us to be present to one another and to your Spirit as we listen, share, and grow in our understanding. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Bible Study

Begin by reading John 10:10.

Discussion:

- What are some things that are important to you so that you can have an "abundant life"?
- In what ways does abuse rob people of the "abundant life" God intends for them?

This passage from John is one of my favourite passages from scripture. I firmly believe that it is God's intention for all of us to live life abundantly. Women who are living with abusive partners live anything but abundant lives. They live lives of fear, terror, and oppression. They feel exhausted and completely depleted as they try to keep themselves and their children physically and emotionally safe. They live lives of humiliation and oppression as their partners seek to control every aspect of their lives and work hard to destroy their sense of self. As one woman said to me, "I was made to feel sub-human."

Some women flee abuse and struggle to find affordable, appropriate housing. Some women spend time in women's shelters, becoming like refugees in their own country.[ii] Some women continue to live with their abusive partners because they are hoping he will change or they determine that that is what is best for their children. All of these women—whether they stay or whether they leave—are not experiencing the abundant life God intends for them. The abuse is like the thief in the passage from John, "stealing and destroying" all that is good. Surely it is God's intention that these women would live free of abuse and have abundant lives.

Discussion:

- Have you ever had to deal with someone you felt was trying to destroy you?
- If you have not had that experience, can you empathize with someone who has?

God's intention is for us all to live abundantly.

- Is affordable and safe housing for abused women available in your community?
- Does your community have a women's shelter?
- What resources are in your community for women who have experienced abuse?
- When a woman leaves an abusive situation, in what ways might she be like a refugee? What parts of her experience might be similar to those of international refugees? What might be different?

Do women experiencing abuse receive the support they need?

I have been supporting women impacted by abuse from their intimate partners for almost 20 years. When I first began this work, I thought that we were pretty progressive as a society in this regard. I thought there was a lot of understanding about the challenges and impacts of abuse, and I thought women generally received good support from friends, family, and professionals. I have discovered this is not true. Women tend to be judged for being in abusive relationships. They are seen as having something wrong with them. "They picked the wrong guy." "They should have known better." But as we remember from the first study, abusive men do not show their true nature until the women are trapped in the relationship in one way or another. Women are judged for staying: "She must like it or she would have left by now." And they are judged for leaving. "She broke up the family."

What are the challenges women face?

As we begin to think about offering the best support possible, it is important to remember what an impossible situation abuse creates for women. The abuse of her partner is just one of the dynamics (something we explored in the last study in the January-February edition of *Glad Tidings*). Here are some other challenges to consider:

Unrealistic expectations:

Society has unrealistic expectations when it comes to women escaping abuse. Consider this, a woman cannot leave her relationship too early. If she is not seen as having tried *everything* to save her marriage, she will be judged. "She didn't work hard enough to save her marriage and now the kids will suffer." But a woman also cannot stay too long. If she stays when there is physical abuse, she is judged harshly. Others will say, "I would never let a man hit me." Also, she will be judged to be a bad mom, "She is *exposing* her children to abuse." In our support group, as women share their stories, we have come to the conclusion that a woman is expected to stay and work on her relationship right up to the very moment she is beaten and then she is expected to get out right away. This is not realistic. Abuse develops gradually over months and years, with the frequency of assaults and seriousness of violence slowly escalating. Women often do not notice just how bad the situation is becoming because some abuse is subtle, not obvious. Emotional, social, and financial abuse are often hard to pinpoint and recognize as abuse. Furthermore, abusers often express deep remorse and promise to be different. Women want to be "fair" to their partners and give them every opportunity to change. In the meantime, as the abuse worsens, the woman's self-esteem plummets and she becomes more isolated from family and friends who might support her. She may also experience growing financial abuse leaving her trapped, with no options.

Pressure to "make the marriage work":

Women want their marriages to work. They take their vows seriously. No one gets married wanting to end up divorced. As well, women are given strong societal messages about "making their marriages work" and are often made to feel responsible for the health of their relationship. For all these reasons, in my experience, women try everything to keep their families intact.

They do not leave until they simply cannot bear it any longer. The problem is her partner's abuse. He is 100% responsible for his actions. But women are rarely given this message. Instead women are given many suggestions about how "to fix" the relationship.

The abuse will not stop at separation:

Many people think that the solution to woman abuse is for the woman to leave the relationship, but because the problem is with the abuser, not the victim, the abuse will not stop just because she leaves the relationship. He will continue to abuse and harass the woman through any channel available to him. He may tell lies about her to family and friends (social abuse). He may stalk her or threaten her (physical abuse). He may refuse to free up the assets of the marriage (financial abuse). These are just a few examples of the many ways abuse continues after separation. Many women report that the abuse gets worse at separation. Abuse is about maintaining power and control. Abusers feel themselves losing control at the point of separation and so tend to step up their game.

Protecting her children will be difficult whether she stays or leaves:

Many people think that if the woman separates from the marriage because of abuse, she will get custody of the children. This is not true. The man's "rights" to his children are unlikely to be limited unless he has physically or sexually abused the children *and* someone other than the mother knows this and will testify to it.[iii] Most men, who are abusive, will use the children after separation to continue to try to hurt and control their ex-partners. They often try to alienate the children from their mothers, telling the children their mom is crazy or stupid. Abusers can cause enormous emotional damage to their children as

they use their children like pawns in a battle. For the most part, the courts seem to remain unaware or unconcerned about this dynamic. Some women choose to stay because their children are vulnerable and they can't imagine being forced to leave them alone with a man who has terrorized them. It often comes down to the impossible choice between staying in the hope of protecting the children from within the marriage; or leaving, knowing that they will have to hand their vulnerable children over to an abuser. As one woman said, "It is like sending my little children to a really scary man at the end of a dark alley."

It does not feel safe to stay or leave:

While, of course, it is not emotionally or physically safe to live with an abusive man, it is not safe to leave either. A woman sometimes stays because the abuser has threatened to kill her, himself, or the children if she leaves. Women believe these threats for good reason—the most dangerous time for a woman is when she attempts to leave the abuser.[iv] Sometimes abusers also threaten to harm or kill the household pet.

Women fear poverty:

Many women are trapped in abuse because of financial abuse or control. Women are afraid if they leave, they will be thrown into poverty. Their fear is well founded; women who have children and leave their partners are five times more likely to be poor than if they stayed.[v] Many of the women I support live in homes they co-own with their partners. In theory, if they leave, they should be able to sell their home and collect their share. But abusers typically make accessing any assets very difficult, often dragging out court proceedings for years. So how is a woman to survive financially after separation if she does not earn enough money to support herself and her children? It is very difficult. Some of my colleagues who work at women's shelters report that many middle class women return to their abusers after time in the shelter because they have no other financial options. If they have assets, they will not qualify for welfare.

Women are isolated because they feel shame:

Women feel great shame about the abuse. They feel that somehow they should have known better than to become involved with their partners. They feel that somehow they have "allowed" the abuse to happen. They feel that being abused says that they are weak or stupid. This shame adds to women's isolation and may keep them from talking to anyone about the abuse. Also, if a woman loves her partner or hopes he will change, she will not want to tell others about the abuse because she is still hopeful the marriage will work out.

How can we offer good support?

As we begin to think about good support, look back at the quote that begins our study. The care and concern these two parents showed their daughter was profoundly helpful to her. When I interviewed Paska for this study she told me the two things that got her through the nightmare she lived. One was her faith in God. The other was, "knowing there were two people who really cared about me."

We never want to underestimate the value of simply caring. Abuse is completely overwhelming for women as they live it, and it can quickly be overwhelming for us if we think we have to some how "fix" the problem. A woman living with abuse will work through a long process of trying to find more safety for herself and her children. We cannot solve her situation but we can be helpful by simply listening, believing, and caring. Let's take a few minutes to think about what else you may do either as an individual or as a group to support women impacted by abuse.

Here are some things you might do if a woman discloses abuse to you:

- Keep her safety as number one. Do not do anything without her explicit permission. Keep everything she says to you confidential.
- Remember she is the expert on her life, her partner, and her children. Do not tell her what she "should" do. She will make the best decisions she can with the choices and information she has at the time. Being a "sounding board" for her is much more helpful than telling her what she should do.
- Tell her she does not deserve to be treated this way. Tell her you are

concerned about her.

- Direct her to resources if she is open to that.[vi]
- Ask her if you can help with practical things (meals/driving/childcare, etc.).
- Do not do things you feel uncomfortable or unsafe doing.
- If she decides to stay in the relationship, do not judge her.
- Show her you respect her by affirming her and her parenting.

Here are some things you may wish to do as a group:

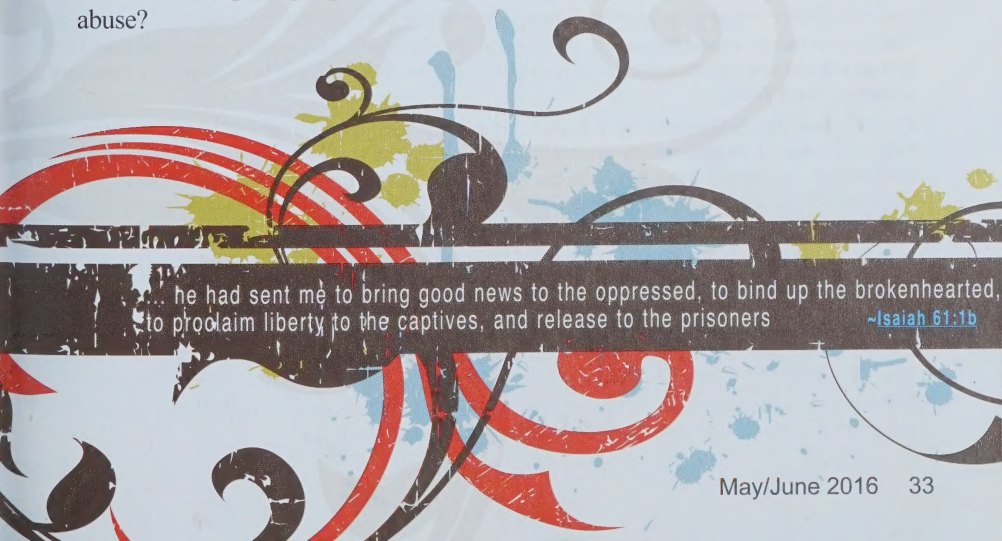
- Invite a speaker from your local women's shelter or women's resource centre to come and speak to your group about abuse.
- Consider supporting your local women's shelter in one way or another.
- Raise this issue within your church. Including victims of abuse in public prayers is one way to do this.
- Let it be known that your church is a safe place to talk about abuse. Some churches put brochures in the women's washrooms with information about local resources. Women can feel free to take these resources without being watched. It also lets women know your church is a church that cares about abuse.

Bible Study

Read together Isaiah 61:1–4. This is a favourite passage of many of the women I support. Remember that this was a passage Jesus quoted as he began to proclaim his ministry. Read the passage from the point of view of a woman, who has experienced abuse.

Discussion:

- How does this passage speak "good news" into lives of women experiencing abuse?


... he had sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners ~Isaiah 61:1b

- How do you think abuse may leave women feeling "brokenhearted"?
- In what ways might women who have experienced abuse have things they need to grieve?
- This passage speaks about liberty, comfort, and gladness. When women receive the kind of support they need and deserve, they begin to experience the "abundant life" God intends for them. As one woman described her experience of escaping abuse said, "I feel I have myself back. Once again I know who I am. I feel strong. I can dream my own dreams and think my own thoughts. I feel like I have a future with hope."

Closing Prayer:

God of peace, there are many places and many people who do not experience peace this day. Right now there are many women and children who live in fear in their own homes. We pray for your protection and for wisdom for friends, family, and professionals who seek to support them. We pray for those who abuse and mistreat others. We ask that you would plant in their hearts a desire to live in loving and respectful ways. Kindle in all our hearts a desire to do justice, love, kindness, and walk humbly with you. Amen.

---

[i] This is Part two of a two-part series. If you have missed Part one, please go back and read it first as the studies are intended to go together. Part one can be found in the January February edition of *Glad Tidings*.

[ii] On any given day in Canada, more than 3,300 women (along with their 3,000 children) are forced to sleep in an emergency shelter to escape violence and abuse. Every night, about 200 women are turned away because the shelters are full. "Shelters for Abused Women in Canada, 2010," Juristat, Marta Burczycka and Adam Cotter, Statistics Canada, June 27, 2011.

[iii] This has not always been true. There has been a shift in court rulings throughout North America over the past 15 years. In most jurisdictions now, the assumption is that divorced parents will share 50/50 custody of the children.

[iv] Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006, p. 38.

[v] Canadian women on their own are the poorest of the poor, Monica Townson, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative, Sept. 8, 2009.

[vi] The website: whenlovehurts.ca has articles and videos that are helpful, not only for women experiencing abuse, but also for those seeking to support them.

Lodestar

by Olive Regina Anstice

If I were wont, O Lord,
To count my faith;
To spell the weakling hope that I in you
repose,

No imprint would remain.
Not just the heavens,
But earth itself would fain disdain my
feeble boast.

It is your unfailing love,
Your steadfast faithfulness that holds me to
the course.

Such trust as I attain
Draws strength from Christ alone;
His holy sacrifice its source, his poured out blood
The spur to growth.

Dear God, so spell my later days, I beg of thee,
That I of Christ a faithful follower will always be.

Brian Johnston
Romania

The Rev. Tordai Arpad was one of the participants in the first Canadian tour of my male choir from the Reformed Theological Institute. He now serves in a village called Nuseni, 85 km from Cluj.

In the past, I often visited him on a Sunday morning and played the organ. The village organist who had no formal training was always happy to have a break. One day he told me about his grandson, Arnold, who he felt had musical talent.

Arpad, the pastor, arranged for me to work with him on my next visit. Arni was very respectful, showed real musical talent, was able to play by ear well, but had little experience in reading the score.

Arni is from a poor family and Pastor Arpad asked me if there was anyway the Canadian church could help with his musical education. A very modest sum was taken from Share the Gift of Music in Romania to cover private piano lessons with a very good teacher in Bistrita, the nearest city. He progressed quickly which I was able to observe during a future visit when Arni played the organ and led the children while accompanying on guitar.

Arnold is now in his second year of religious/music studies in Cluj, which is a great program for him as he continues his service in his home congregation and in summer camps.

In July, I was invited with my male choir to sing in a nearby village for the dedication of the renovated church. At the last minute when I knew I wouldn't have enough young men available, Arni assisted me on guitar and also with two children from Nuseni. Working together, we produced a short program that was enjoyable for all.

Once again, we see how Gifts of Change can really make a difference in a person's musical development and also that of local congregations as these young people continue to serve and sing God's praises.

Cariboo Presbyterian Church
Highlights from Northern Light, *the Official Newsletter of The Cariboo Presbyterian Church*

2015 Reports From Our Missionary in the South: Bruce Wilcox

More than once while driving to or from yet another blessed time of worship and fellowship in one of our churches last summer, Jackie and I saw the most beautifully vivid rainbow. This got me thinking about rainbows—such a striking reminder that God is a covenant making and a covenant keeping God! This physical witness in the sky of God's promise to Noah is beautiful, multi-coloured, and yet one. And it pertains to the whole earth.

This also gets me thinking of how profound the Biblical description of all of us being different parts of one body really is—having been made up of people called from every ethnic group, culture, and nation on earth: multi-coloured, beautiful, yet one in Christ. The scripture (I Corinthians 12) also emphasizes the equal value and importance of every part. It's wonderful to witness and be a part of the operations of the various gifts of the Spirit given to each one here and the ways the Lord keeps building us up together into more of the fullness of His love and image—through bearing one another's burdens in prayer along with much self-sacrificial physical and practical support and encouragement.

So many different ministries and evangelistic community outreaches flow out of this as a result: musical coffeehouses in Lac La Hache; an Alcoholics Anonymous program; mid-week Bible studies; a mission trip to Haiti by Kathy Carter, one of our house church hosts; another house church family ministering longer term in Asia with Mission Aviation Fellowship; visitations; care and comfort for the sick and dying; and all kinds of ministry to seniors, including regular church services at the Seniors' Village in Williams Lake, the Carefree Manor in 100 Mile House, and (rotationally) the Millsite Lodge

in 100 Mile House. Then, of course, there's the Christmas pageants, involvement in Christmas food hamper projects for those in need, participating in ecumenical ministry at times with other churches, and all kinds of other good works that God has actually "prepared beforehand for us to walk in." (Ephesians 2:10).

The Lord also encouraged us with the baptism of four people in the lake at Lac la Hache last summer, as well as a number of other new folks who have been led to worship with us—exciting stuff! We had an awesome time at our annual Rendezvous last June for all our house churches which was held at the inter-lakes area and organised by our Sheridan Lake house church folks. They did a fantastic job!

Once again, we were also privileged to be invited by the community club of Lac la Hache to lead church on-site down by the lake at their huge annual Garlic Festival in August. Also, as Chaplain of the Forest Grove Legion, I was personally blessed to participate with Ginny Alexander and others in a very moving service around the cenotaph out there on Remembrance Day, where well over one hundred people turned out. As I ponder the many ways God ministers through his people here, I am humbled and reminded of the word laos (the Greek New Testament word for "people" from which the word laity is derived). Within scripture, this word does not mean some kind of institutionalized second-class Christians, but rather all the people of God: one multi-coloured spiritual organism called and chosen and equally treasured by Him as a "priesthood of all believers," each with equal purposes and roles to play through different gifts and opportunities.

I would like to extend a huge 'thank you' to everyone in our house churches here as well as individuals and churches across the country, who are part of this important mission of Christ with us through their indispensable prayers and gifts of support. God bless you all!

2015 Reports From Our Missionaries in the North, Nazko and Area Dakelh Outreach (NADO): Shannon Bell-Wyminga

There are many aspects to this First Nations ministry that we have been called to in the Ndazkoh area. We often do events and activities together through the year as well as our individual house church meetings and visits to the Lhoosk'uz village.

In May, rather than participate as we have in the past couple of years in the Women of the North retreat, we held our own women's retreat weekend at Ness Lake Bible Camp. The larger retreat had been cancelled and we were able to book the camp for ourselves with some funding from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund of the Presbyterian Church. Fourteen of us gathered for the weekend, and though it was interrupted on the Saturday night by news of a serious

vehicle accident involving the family members of some of our participants, we all had a great weekend, and with prayer the victims in the accident were spared their lives.

Two carloads of people made the long trek to Sheridan Lake in June for the annual house church Rendezvous where we said our official good-bye to Dave and Linda Webber, who officially retired at the end of March. Representatives from Punchaw, Ndazkoh, and Quesnel house churches all attended and had a great time though it was more than a five-hour drive each way for most of us.

As has become the tradition, we all drummed and sang our worship songs at the Aboriginal Day event in Quesnel as well as having a booth set up for the church and my crafts. Our church is now seen as an integral partner in the Aboriginal Day event.

This past summer was the first year Jon and I stayed put in Ndazkoh for the summer, and took our vacation at other points in the year. It was wonderful to be around for all the community events that happened during that time of year: culture camps, pow wows, and more events that bring people out. As well, people are generally outside all summer and a simple walk through the reserve gives lots of opportunity for visits and relationship building. Once again, we hosted a Korean Love Corps team from Vancouver in the summer, having a Vacation Bible School for the kids and a Feast Night followed by cultural games for the whole community. Our relationship with the Vancouver Korean Presbyterian Church continues during the rest of the year through Facebook and visits, and we often call upon them to visit people from our community who are in the hospital in Vancouver. It is one of the ways we can be one another's hands and feet and presence.

Christmas can be a difficult time for many in our ministry. Low incomes, which preclude buying lots of gifts for children and grandchildren, alongside all of the commercial hype of the season can combine with grief from many losses to make it a hard time of year. In December, we did two things to address this. Early in the month, we hosted a Moving Beyond Grief workshop in both the Ndazkoh and Quesnel communities. Herb Russell, a Gitsan elder and pastor, facilitated both two-day workshops. They were particularly well attended in Quesnel with much healing taking place. The next weekend, we set out to have Christmas fun. Both house churches trekked out to Barkerville, a national historic site, to enjoy a Sunday at Victorian Christmas. We attended the Anglican service in the old church, sitting close to the wood stove in the middle of the sanctuary. We wandered through the snow-laden streets, watching the horsedrawn sleigh go by and browsed in the shops that carried goods from the 1860s. It was a low-key but fun way to enjoy the season together.

WMS ... Did you Know?

by Colleen Wood

Throughout the course of the year, we are privileged to have many groups and individuals visit our office at 50 Wynford Drive. Today, Sarah Kim and I had the privilege of meeting and learning from Ms. Jancy Johnson, and her husband, Mr. Lonan Johnson Puthenpurackal, from India, who were being hosted by International Ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Ms. Jancy Johnson is the Secretary of the Nurses League of the Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI), a partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Many of the hospitals and nursing school which we have supported and visited over the years, such as Jobat Christian Hospital, Indore Christian Hospital, and the Graduate School of Nursing: Middle India Board of Education (GSN), are members of the CMAI.

The Vision of the CMAI is: *That they may have life in its fullness.*

Its Mission is: *In response to the love and command of Christ, CMAI's mission is to serve the Church in India in its ministry of healing, to build a just and healthy society.*

They accomplish this by promoting ethical health care, capacity building, demonstrating models of health and development, disaster relief, and knowledge dissemination.

Specifically, the Nurses League encourages and promotes spiritual fellowship, ensures high standards of nursing education consistent with Christian principles, promotes

Nursing students in India

quality nursing service in the total healthcare service, and promotes nursing as a Christian vocation. They do this by offering professional training programs, short-term courses, capacity building workshops, conferences, regional retreats, and regional sectional meetings.

It was interesting to hear that many of the mission hospitals in India serve the rural areas. This is also where 70% of the people live. The government hospitals tend to be in the cities so they are out of reach of the rural population. Many of the mission hospitals are closing because of their inability to attract staff due to remote locations, poor salaries, and recent government regulations. This is a huge challenge at present.

Ms. Johnson also spoke on the Graduate School of Nursing in Indore (Middle India Board of Education), which I had the privilege of visiting in 2013. The Graduate School of Nursing (GSN) was begun in 1945 with the aim to prepare Indian Nurses in the area of Education and Administration for Hindi-speaking areas. It continues to serve and has a well-stocked library, computer lab, modern teaching aids, and learning labs. Currently, their library is being renovated thanks to funds from International Ministries, The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Their plans and dreams for the future of GSN include subscribing to 10 International Nursing and Medical Journals, upgrading the GSN library with new books, setting up a skill lab at GSN, and scholarship for students.

It is wonderful to note that the Women's Missionary Society continues to fund scholarships for nursing students in India through the Pauline Brown Fund, including students at the Graduate School of Nursing.

In the Society

The **Westminster** Presbyterial held their 102nd Annual General Meeting on February 24 at St. Andrew's-Newton Presbyterian Church, with members of the BC Synodical also in attendance.

The meeting opened with worship led by the Rev. Geoff Jay, who led us in singing several hymns, and gave an inspiring devotional on Following Jesus. Outgoing President Joyce Davis conducted the business meeting, including the review of the annual and treasurer's reports, and the nomination and election of the executive. Offerings from the meeting were designated for the Maya-Mam project of Guatemala.

The highlight of the meeting was hearing from our guest speakers, the Rev. Sarah Kim, WMS Executive Director, and Janet Brewer.

Sarah and Janet shared a very interesting report on their attendance at the Tumekutana conference of African women, near Accra, Ghana, in September 2015. Tumekutana is Swahili for "We have come together," and they did with about 50 women representing 22 different African countries, plus representatives from PCUSA, the Church of Scotland, and our own WMS. The theme was "Freedom in Christ: from Slavery to Empowerment." They told us about the opening ceremony with colourful national costumes, and lots of singing, dancing, and praising God, and their visit to Elmina Castle, a Unesco World Heritage site, which, 500 years ago, was the location of the slave trade, when men and women from different parts of Africa were shipped off every year to different parts of the world, under deplorable conditions.

They also shared the news that women and children in many of these countries are still enslaved in different ways, such as human and children's trafficking, sheer poverty fueled in part by corrupt governments, wife abuse in a patriarchal society, widows' lack of rights, and the inability to get documentation to prove who they are. The women remain so positive about their faith, their prayer life, and their praise of God, that we can learn from them about God's grace and thanksgiving. We can help in their struggle for empowerment by our solidarity in supporting their cause, and by our prayers. At the end of the conference, in response to the question, "What happens now?" a testament was drawn up, with commitments made to show their own women the support of others.

Sarah and Janet also talked about the present state of the WMS and the 2012 Task Force on the future of the WMS which resulted in staff cuts,

closing the Book Room, changing to biennial Council meetings, and the idea of forming PCW groups, which was not popular in all parts of the country. A new task force was formed to look at how Christian women are doing things differently with their free time, where their interests lie, and trying to find a new way of providing them with soul care, community, mentoring, networking, and sharing in spiritual living. A new outreach arm was proposed, called WTW (Women to Women), and an online space was created, named "The Hub" via a website and Facebook page, which will reach out to women globally with blogs and faith sharing

After hearing news from WMS groups in Parksville and Kamloops, our new President, Sheila Jakus, offered the Benediction.

The **Huron-Perth** Presbyterial held their annual meeting at Knox Presbyterian Church, Listowel on January 26. The theme for the day was "Our Changing Vision."

Mary Duffin, our president, opened the meeting with prayer followed by the Rev. Don McCallum, Knox minister, and Marsha Hamilton, President of the WMS Listowel, welcoming us. We then sang, Come Sing O Church in Joy.

Mary Duffin gave the meditation on Catch the Vision, Dream the Dream. The WMS purpose was repeated in unison followed by the reading of the minutes of the 2015 annual meeting. Committee secretaries then gave their yearly reports consisting of what each WMS group had accomplished in 2015, and then Bernice Richards installed the 2016 executive.

St. Andrew's WMS, Stratford, led the In Memoriam, remembering our members who passed away during the year, followed by St. Mary's WMS leading us in devotions.

The afternoon speaker was the Rev. Sarah Kim. She spoke on her recent experience in Africa at Tumekutana, a conference of Presbyterian/Reformed Church Women of Africa.

To close, we sang the hymn, Christ You Call Us All to Service and a prayer was given.

Lindsay Presbyterial met at Glenarm Presbyterian Church for their Annual Meeting on January 27. The theme for the day was Hope based on Psalm 139.

Following the registration, the Glenarm ladies provided refreshments and Helen Torrey led a hymn sing for the 28 members.

President Eileen Smith constituted the day with prayer and all repeated the WMS purpose. Lizz Hoyle, from Glenarm, warmly welcomed everyone. Then Lindsay members led worship centred on the Real Meaning of Christmas. Joan Snider encouraged the ladies to ponder and listen for

Hope and Peace, using thoughts from Mother Teresa; Joy, by singing Joy to the world; and Love, by thinking of it as a gift.

Business began with secretary, Joan Snider, reading the minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting and highlights from the September 2015 Fall Meeting. Members of the executive presented their reports for 2015, beginning with Treasurer Eileen Mennell's report which showed that the Presbyterial objective had been met.

After new business, we enjoyed a tasty lunch. A hymn sing brought the ladies together for the afternoon session. A meaningful In Memoriam service was conducted by the Woodville ladies. The day closed with singing a special rendition of How Great Thou Art and with Eileen Smith giving the Benediction.

Margaret Reynolds welcomed **Brockville** Presbyterial to their Annual Meeting at Knox, Morrisburg on January 29. President Janet Jones constituted the meeting with prayers and Henny Donkersteeg was pianist for the hymns.

Brockville led the worship on the theme, Be Bold and Courageous in the Face of Adversity, based on Matthew 6:25-26 and 34. A skit, Elderly Worry Wart Lady, shared the story of a woman who was seeking counselling that allowed her to overcome her fears and find peace in prayer and faith in the Word of God.

Ruth Pollock spoke about her trip to Guatemala when she visited the Mayan people, who are among some of the poorest in the country. Schools have been set up to teach nutrition, agriculture, as well as reading, writing, and math basics. There are many challenges faced by the Mayan people, including illiteracy, patriarchal practices, and the influx of mining companies to the region.

A discussion was then led by the president on the safe and proper storage of archival materials. Then, the Rev. Feras Chamas introduced Mrs. Kandalaft, a long-time friend. Both are refugees from Syria and they were asked, "What does it mean to be bold and courageous in Syria?" The unrest in Syria has been present since 2003, with different groups claiming rights to the same land. Peaceful negotiations have not been possible because of a lack of willingness to listen and hear other points of view. It seems that there are just two possible options—flee or fight. Over 260,000 Syrians have lost their homes and possessions and are refugees. The unrest and chaos are fueled by available weapons, a media frenzy, a disregard for human life, and outside involvement. Peaceful communication is where the renewal must start.

Rev. Chamas then installed the officers, and Donna McIlveen and Henny Donkersteeg led the Memorial.

Memorial

Ida Marie White

Ida Marie White died on April 4, 2016, at the Bluewater Rest Home in Zurich ON, in her 101st year.

Ida was born on a farm at Walton, not far from Goderich, Ontario. She graduated in nursing from Alexandra Marine General Hospital, Goderich, in 1938. During WWII, she learned that South Africa needed Canadian nurses. In 1941, she was sent by the Canadian Army as a nursing sister to Capetown, South Africa. She served in hospitals in Durban, Egypt, Sahara, and Italy. She reported that after the war the nurses were flown back to England in a bomber and packed in like "chickens on a roost." She returned to Canada with the rank of Captain.

Ida attended the Toronto Bible College and served in the United Church Mission Hospital in Hearst and also the Children's Aid Society in Goderich. She then studied at the Missionary and Deaconess Training School (Ewart College). She heard God's call and left for the Bhil Field in India in 1953 under appointment by The Women's Missionary Society.

After language study, she served as a midwife with the Bhil people. She was an excellent midwife and at one time it was reported that there were four orphan babies being cared for in the WMS bungalow. She mothered many orphaned children. Their families still remember the stories of her love and care. As community health outreach programs increased, she studied public health in India and began the community health program in Mendha on the Bhil Field.

She retired to Goderich in 1979 to care for her aging mother. She was very active in the Arthur Circle WMS and Knox Church, Goderich. Her home had a welcome out to all. She loved to have children visit her, and she enjoyed Bible Study and her prayer group. She was a great friend to many.

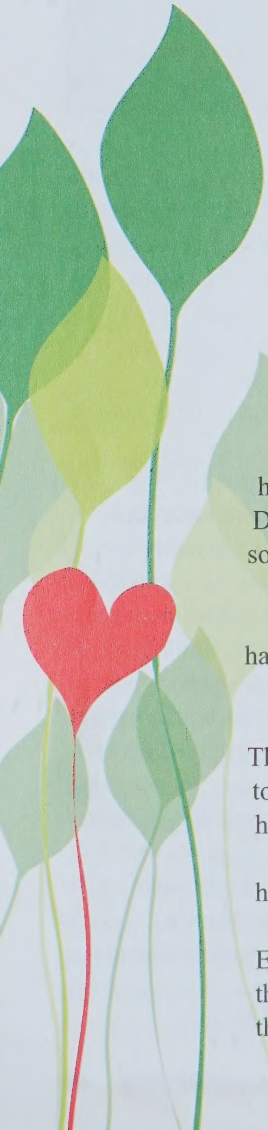
Ida's two brothers and two sisters predeceased her. Her nephew John White lovingly cared for her during these past several years.

Last July, many gathered for her 100th birthday celebration. It was such a happy time for Ida and it gave her an opportunity to visit many friends, especially her overseas colleagues. Ida will be missed by many both in Canada and especially on the Bhil Field in India.

(A special thanks to Wilma Welsh who provided this information.)

Love found a way

by Victoria Stirling



Guilt over something you've done isn't the only emotion that tortures caregivers of a parent, partner, or spouse suffering with Alzheimer's or Dementia. When they are unable to recognize you that is also devastating; we desperately want them to know us.

When it happens instinctively one wants to not believe it. We think, if it is ignored it will fix itself. The sad truth is so much harder to have to admit.

Harvey's lined features looked drawn and anxious, as his blue eyes peered blankly into my face. "Where's Vicky; where's my wife?"

I choked back my response to tell him I was sitting right beside him because previously this had just added to his distress. My 93-year-old beloved husband, suffering with Dementia was with me physically, but mentally his reality was somewhere else.

Again he repeated, "Where is my wife, where's Vicky?"

My throat constricted as I took hold of his outstretched hand. "Who am I Harvey?"

He stared hard at me; "You're my mum."

"If it's who you want me to be Harvey, then it's who I am." The words hurt as I uttered them; I ached inside for my husband to really know who I was, but I didn't know how I could get him to remember.

Harvey held my hand with a firm grip as tears filled his eyes, he cried. "What is wrong with me Mum. Am I going crazy?"

I shook my head. "No you're not going crazy Harvey. Everything you know is up there, but you've forgotten some things and you get anxious when you realize you can't remember them. It's a normal reaction; I'm sure I'd feel that way too."

Mae Thomson
Grace Presbyterian,
Calgary AB

Mary "Norma" Reeves
Varsity Acres
Presbyterian Church,
Calgary AB

Betty Bushell
Kinlough Presbyterian
Church, Kinlough ON

Vera Lewis
Margaret Armstrong
St. Andrew's WMS,
Kitchener, ON

Alice Pauley
WMS, New St. James
Presbyterian,
London ON

Grace Gammie
Fern MacDonald
Lucknow Presbyterian
Church, Lucknow ON

Jean Fleming
WMS, Tolmie Memorial
Presbyterian Church,
Port Elgin ON

He shook his grey tousled head. "Well I'm glad you're here." He then leant over and planted a kiss on the side of my cheek."

Tears welled up in my eyes as I turned and looked at him. I gently squeezed his hand as I uttered the endearment we would said or write, to each other many times over our 62 years of marriage. As I spoke the Spanish words to him, "El rigua ti quernio mucho quapo," (My darling, I love you very much.) Harvey smiled. His tears dried, and he replied, "all the time my love and forever."

He then peered into my face, "Where have you been Vicky I was getting worried."

Our loving salutation was how I was able to keep my husband knowing who I was; he was always able to recall those familar words. He knew I was the only other person, as well as himself, who knew them. My beloved husband died July, 6 2015.

For a small miracle in that heartbreaking situation, I will be forever grateful. Our love for each other found a way for us to stay connected.

The idiom says, It is only when we walk a mile in another's shoes do we fully understand. As I know how painful this situation is with a loved one, and for anyone going through the same sad process I hope and pray what I've written here will give you comfort, and perhaps even a clue how to help with your own relationship. If it should happen hang onto it, it's a priceless gift and one you will forever treasure.

Together with WMS groups, congregations, and mission-minded people We Can make a difference.

TOGETHER We Can!

We continue to support these two exciting projects throughout 2016.

Maya-Mam Women, Guatemala

In the western highlands of Guatemala, PWS&D is working to improve the livelihoods of indigenous Maya Mam women and their families. Programs are strengthening food security and nutrition by helping households improve agricultural practices, crop diversity and livestock production. Indigenous land rights, women's empowerment and cultural identity are important themes that are being addressed through the program.

Arise Ministry

In response to the overwhelming need in Toronto to intentionally support one of the cities most marginalized and victimized populations, Arise ministry provides outreach, intensive case management, and pastoral care for women wanting to exit the sex trade. It advocates for the rights, goals, and dreams of those who have become victims of sex-trafficking.

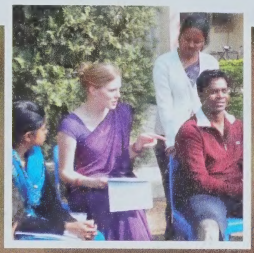
Please send your donation to:
Women's Missionary Society
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto,
ON M3C 1J7 800-619-7301
wms@presbyterian.ca

PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address

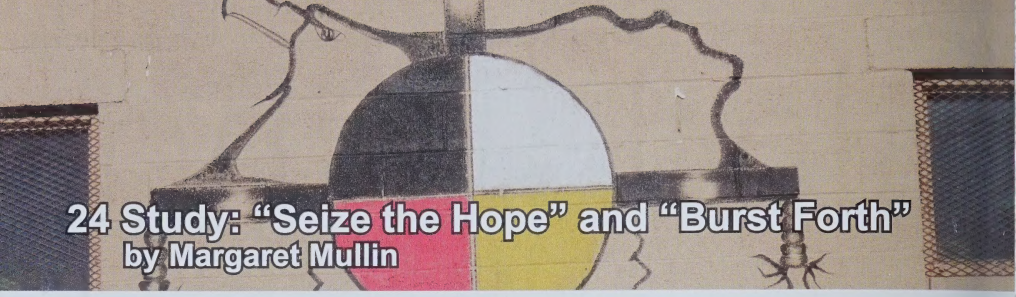
Glad Tidings

July/August 2016



WHAT IS MISSION?

Partnership, hospitality, service, prayer, history, evangelism, ministry, outreach, care, ever-changing.....



24 Study: "Seize the Hope" and "Burst Forth"
by Margaret Mullin

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **Hospitality is Mission**
by Lynda Reid

6 **Service as Mission**
by Donna McIlveen

8 **Jesus will be with Us**
by Ann Taylor

11 **Mission Partnership in India**
by Michelle Verwey

17 **What is Mission?**
by Katherine Allen

19 **Mission Moments**
by Cathy Reid

22 **Mission**
by Karen Wasacase

34 **Small Intervention equals Big Impact in India**
by Erin Whittaker

39 **Mission In Action**

IN THE SOCIETY

42 **In the Society**

47 **Remembering**

The cover mission photos are from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. They include mission work in India, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Malawi as well as a Truth and Reconciliation walk in Ottawa. More photos can be found at https://www.flickr.com/photos/pcconnect

Glad Tidings

July/August 2016

Volume 92, No. 4

EDITOR: Colleen Wood

DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2016 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

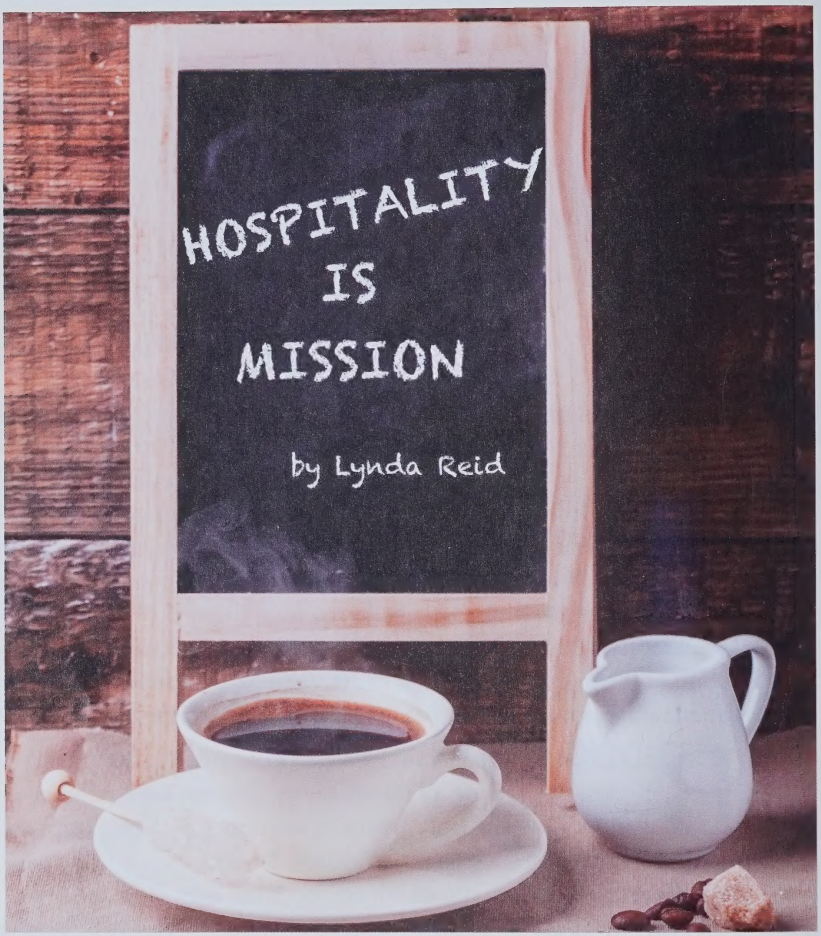
As I have been working through the articles for this month's *Glad Tidings*, I have also been thinking a lot about the verse, "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14 (NIV) I also come across it paraphrased as, "Perhaps this is the moment for which you have been created," and was moved by these words.

Perhaps this is the moment for which you have been created. Imagine if we started to live our life with this thought always in the back of our mind. What if we were always ready to seize each moment in our day, because it could be the moment God created us for. In reality, I think God creates us for a lifetime of moments. Yet, I wonder how many times we miss those moments because we are not aware of them or are too scared to act. We are not sure we are being called or are not ready to serve. We are not open to the urgings of God.

But God calls us to serve. I have heard it often said in WMS circles, that we are all missionaries. I agree, but sometimes I wonder if we are truly living as missionaries. Sometimes we are timid. Sometimes we lack confidence. Sometimes we think we lack the resources. Sometimes we are too busy. But, God needs us, especially at a time like this.

As I listen to the reports going to the 142nd General Assembly, as I think about our own society, and even as I see the state of Christianity in Canada, I do think this is a special time. This is a time when we need prophets. This is a time when we need dreamers. This is a time when we need workers. This is a time when we need to leave our timidity behind and to serve. We need courage. We need to be missional.

Just as it did not look good for the Jews in the book of Esther, it doesn't look good for us now. But if we believe, like Esther, that God made us for a moment such as this, we can, we will have the courage to serve. We can change the course of events. You. You, have been created for a time like this.



My worshipping congregation has evolved into a very friendly church. Once—not so much. A turning point came for us several years ago when families with children were asked to sit in the very short side pews of the sanctuary when they came to church on Sunday. It tried to address a situation, but was hurtful to many. We lived with it for a while. Then a rocking chair was donated to the church. Instead of putting it in the refurbished nursery, it found a place in the sanctuary. It began as a refuge for parents to rock a baby or small child. Now we have three rocking chairs in the sanctuary. One is used by a woman who suffers from back pain. Often, one is used by the children's storyteller or someone who wants to rock while they listen and participate in worship.

You may wonder why at this stage in my life in the church I choose to define mission as hospitality. Please read on—but I ask for forgiveness in advance!

"We are a very friendly church." We've heard this description again and again. And yet during my working years, too many times, I would be invited to a church for a workshop, meeting, or to lead Sunday worship and not be greeted, not be hosted in any way. Congregations are 'friendly' with each other, but not always to the stranger. I've struggled with whether this is a bad thing or a good thing.

At Knox, we are friendly with each other, but what has developed is a ministry of hospitality. I believe it started within the congregation as we took care of ourselves in special ways. Coffee time after worship is one of the keys. We tried several times to say "Cookies aren't necessary," and yet they still show up. Dave loves to treat us with rice pudding or cornbread. Catherine won a tub of ice cream so it was sundae Sunday. Of course, we celebrate lots of congregational and personal milestones with cake. Yes, we feed ourselves, but this leads to fantastic fellowship and sharing. Many friendship groups have formed around the coffee (and tea) and cookies.

A natural consequence of our receiving and experiencing hospitality is that we are able to be hospitable. Sunday visitors are warmly welcomed as they get four or five invitations to "come down for coffee." Someone then stays with them and introductions are made. Newcomers easily integrate into one of the table groups and then become an integral part of our congregational life.

Since my retirement, I have worked with our Food Cupboard Committee, another place where our hospitality is part of our mission. Knox's food cupboard is a small project, open only two mornings a month, yet we serve 40 to 50 families each time. Our guests express their gratitude not only for the food, but also for our friendly reception and kindness in accommodating any special needs. Last month, Doric brought 'thank you' gifts for us.

I know that, over my 45 plus years in active involvement within the church, the definition of mission has changed. The face of mission is blurred and the boundaries of the mission field are vague. Matthew 25:31–46 is known as a message to `the nations judging their care of the vulnerable in their societies. I see this also as a directive for the family of God and each member of that family. We are called on to feed, clothe, visit, and welcome. In other words, we are called to be in relationship with one another, and how better to develop that relationship than over coffee and cornbread. Dave, Catherine, and Doric are the true missionaries at Knox as they share their gift of hospitality with others.

The Rev. Lynda Reid, although retired, is very active in her church community and the larger church. Her close circle of friends have come from eating ice cream around one of the coffee time tables at Knox.

Service as Mission

Blogs
Read about how women of the Presbyterian Church live faithfully. Contributors are disciples, ministers, mothers, sisters, justice seekers, and/or so much more.
Events
This page features all current and upcoming events for The Hub. Featuring the 2017 Women's Gathering: Rooted in Love.
Latest Posts
Best Places to Seek Silence
A Mother's

by Donna McIlveen

"I am a servant of Christ and what I do is part of the larger picture of mission and service undertaken by Christians everywhere. And Christians everywhere know that we are never alone."

My office is located just off the dining room of my home. It's not a large room, but there is room enough for the usual office furnishings of book shelves, filing cabinets, and a desk. On the wall above my desk hang two prints. One print is Rembrandt's "The Return of the Prodigal Son" and the other is "The Boy Jesus in the Temple" by Hofmann. When I'm in my office tending to the administrative tasks assigned to presbytery clerks—typing minutes, composing correspondence, planning, filing, answering emails, and talking on the phone—from time to time (too often to count) I find my gaze drifting away from whatever the task at hand is, to the two prints hanging on the wall. In one, a young Jesus is listening. In the other, a father is placing his hands on his son's shoulder. In both, I see compassion, understanding, patience, and love. Actions that I see as being at the heart of Christian service—at the heart of my calling to be a servant of Jesus Christ through diaconal ministry.

At my service of designation on February 13, 1983, I was presented with the insignia of The Order of Diaconal Ministries—a silver

pin, circular in shape with the St. Andrew's cross in the centre. The designation pin is the outward symbol of the commitment made to servant ministry, to diaconal ministry. The Greek word *diakonia* means service among others, or the church's ministry of service. Diaconal ministry is servant ministry—service in Christ's name—and that call is exercised in many settings, including small offices located off the dining rooms.

Now regardless of the setting, there are some days when serving is difficult. Nothing gets marked off the to-do-list and instead more tasks get added. The phone won't stop ringing … the emails keep coming … the printer jams … and when looking for a particular piece of correspondence, a pile of paper precariously perched plummets to the ground. On those days, the Christ-like servant qualities of compassion, understanding, patience, and love—especially patience—are difficult to find. No doubt buried under that pile of paper. Some days there is much work to be done—and I don't mean filing!

Regardless of the task, whether routine or special, it's easy to get caught up in just the doing. We forget the why and for whom. Why do I serve? Whom do I serve? Both questions, and the answers, point back to our calling to serve Christ and to be Christ-like in our service. As servants we are called not just to do, but to be. As we share Christ's love in word and deed, we are to be compassionate, understanding, patient, and loving. Sitting at my desk, my call is to embody those actions, even when obstacles get in the way—obstacles that at times are of our own doing. I forget to take time for scripture reading and prayer at the beginning of the day. I forget to be open to God … to place my trust in God … to listen to God—the source of all compassion, understanding, patience, and love—the same God who forgives me when my lack of patience is what stands out while the precarious piles of paper plummet.

Sitting at my desk, papers askew, I am humbled by the call of God upon my life. To be a Diaconal Minister, a servant of Christ, called for the work of ministry in building up the body of Christ, is a tremendous privilege and joy. Over the last 33 years, I have served in a variety of contexts, and right now a fair bit of that service takes place in my office located just outside my dining room. As I sit at my desk and gaze at the two prints hanging on the wall above my desk, I am reminded that no matter the task, I do not do it in isolation. I am a servant of Christ and what I do is part of the larger picture of mission and service undertaken by Christians everywhere. And Christians everywhere know that we are never alone. Jesus is present and he is listening. The arms of the one in whose name we serve rest upon our shoulders.

Jesus will be with Us

by Ann Taylor

God's Calling

God's Sending

Witnessing to the World

God's Presence

Understanding mission these days has not been easy or simple for me. Knowing the Church's mission or my personal mission at times has been absolutely clear, but sometimes the direction is caught in the fog. To get some clarity on this, I went to the concordance of my RSV Bible. To my surprise there was not one listing for the word "mission." However, I came upon the word mission as I was reading Jesus' prayer to his disciples in John 17, The Message. Here are two parts of this prayer where the word mission is included:

"In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world,
I give them a mission in the world …
… these disciples know
That you have sent me on this mission,
I have made your very being known to them–
Who you are and what you do–
And continue to make it known,
So that your love for me
Might be in them
Exactly as I am in them."

This prayer seemed to give some unity to what my experiences in mission have been. This broader understanding allowed me to see that "mission" is like a diamond with many facets. That making God

"For me, mission has been marked by certain characteristics: a calling from God, being sent, witnessing to the world, and experiencing God's presence."

known—who God is, and what God does, happens in a surprising variety of ways.

For me, mission has been marked by certain characteristics: a calling from God, being sent, witnessing to the world, and experiencing God's presence.

God's Calling

At a time in my life when I was in transition, searching for purpose after my retirement and relocation, a friend of mine approached me with news of a need for a person to fill the office of Education Secretary for the Atlantic Mission Society (AMS), and eventually I became its president. As I have not been involved in that mission group, I knew little of their work. However, it seemed interesting and exciting as I had some Christian Education training and experience. With some trepidation, I agreed to accept. God had called me to a mission.

God's Sending

Indeed, God had called me to mission, and then sent me on a mission that kept unfolding. As time went by, God continued to show me, through word and deed, where to go and what to do: sharing and writing stories of encouragement; growing in faith with members of the AMS, the WMS, and the greater church; discerning God's direction for projects; leading in new ventures for aiding those in need of food, disaster recovery, and economic survival; and going out into the world of Nicaragua, food banks, Women's Gatherings, Vacation Bible and Sunday Schools, and unknown neighborhoods—often out of my comfort zone.

Witnessing to the World

Perhaps my teen years had best prepared me for my 'retirement' service as it was during those years that I was first drawn to the global context of the Church's mission. A young returning missionary from East Germany inspired my decision

What is God calling us to be and do? Where are we being sent? What is witnessing to our world in this era?

to enter a ministry of Christian Education. I eventually did a work camp project in German forests. My world awareness continued with ecumenical involvement for youth, study travel, and a World Mission tour that helped ground Jesus' admonition to go into all the world. The 2015 General Assembly Study and Report, *Living in God's Mission Today* (sec. 11.8), has helped me clarify our witness in this age.

> "By the power of the Spirit, and in unity with Christ, the church is called to be a community that witnesses to the joyful and hopeful reign of Christ. The Spirit leads the church to celebrate and support manifestations of the reign of Christ where it discerns them in the world."

God's Presence

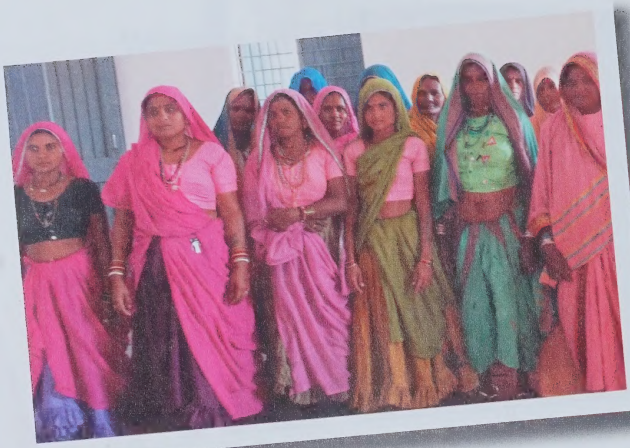
I have always been moved by the Great Commission of Jesus, which ends with the assurance that He will always be with us. Mission involves a sense of God's presence. The foundation of prayer supported these years of my mission. These included prayer of other followers, personal prayers, and unknown prayers. Many times I recited, "The Lord is my strength," or "Nothing is impossible for God." Often I sang, "Strength for today and bright Hope for tomorrow." Many short, on the spot prayers, have helped me in my mission. Also, early morning time with God's word continues to put me in the right mission framework and sense of God's being with me.

Times continue to change. The knowledge of my local congregations' mission and my personal mission now presents me with another time for discernment. What is God calling us to be and do? Where are we being sent? What is witnessing to our world in this era? These are all great questions and may present new challenges. We can be confident the fog will lift and new vistas will open. Jesus will give us a mission. Indeed Jesus is with us to the end of the earth.

Mission Partnerships in India

by Michelle Verwey

Praise the Lord, whose abundant grace and mercy has supported the ministry in central India through International Ministries and *Presbyterians Sharing*. In 2015, my work became *hybrid*. Although I am living in Canada, I make regular trips to India. This allows me to work with teams of Indian colleagues from two Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) partners: the Mid India Board of Educator's (MIBE) Graduate School for Nurses, and the Central Regional Board of Health Services (CRBHS) of the Church of North India.



Partnering with MIBE to cultivate nurse leaders

Since I began my hybrid mission work, I have gone to India five times, and had planned a sixth trip which was cancelled due to local security concerns. During these times in India, I ran a workshop at the MIBE Graduate School for Nurses entitled, "Basic epidemiological measures and public health indicators." I also facilitated workshops run by the Nurses' League of the Christian Medical Association of India (the parent body of MIBE) on burn and diabetic wound care. These workshops were run by an expert nurse from Canada. I also taught classes in statistics, epidemiology, community health nursing, research, and nursing foundations. Many of the students who graduate from the MIBE Graduate School for Nurses become nursing leaders in the mission health network across India. Past students of mine are ward-in-charge nurses, nursing superintendents, nursing tutors, and nursing school principals.

Partnering with CRBHS for health and development in rural areas

This past year and a half, I worked with the CRBHS Project Coordinator and staff on improving tools and capacity in reporting for the Presbyterian World Service & Development's (PWS&D) supported community work in Hatpiplya, Barwani, and Ratlam. The three-year project in these areas is completed and the evaluation of the improvements in the 27 project villages is underway. The team at CRBHS looks forward to reporting the results to you in the future.

I also supported the CRBHS to run a baseline survey in several villages near Mendha. The nursing students from MIBE Graduate School for Nurses assisted in administering the questionnaire while learning about rural community health and research. The baseline survey is part of the process for re-opening the community health and development work in Mendha, where the late WMS missionary Miss Ida White started the community health work in the 1950s. The survey helped guide the development of the goal and objectives for the proposed CRBHS

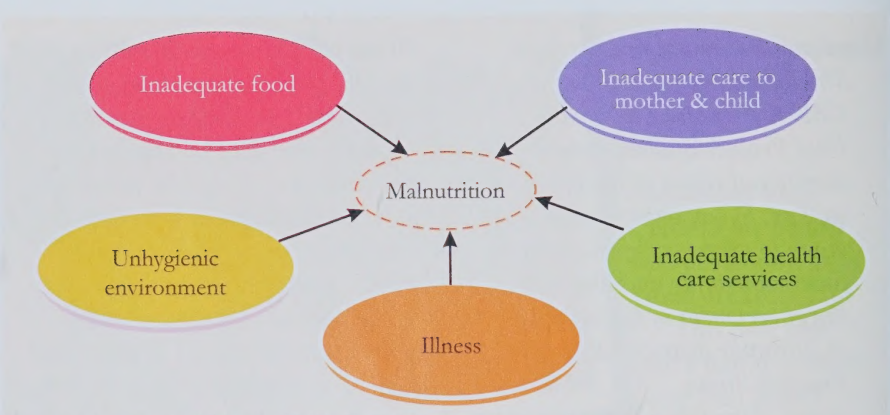
Mendha Community Pilot Project:

The long-term goal of the CRBHS Mendha Community Pilot Project is to improve the nutritional status of the family as well as; to empower women and youth to exercise rights, build their community and link with the government in five villages in Alirajpur district, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Some of the *Glad Tidings* readers are familiar with the Mendha context as you may have visited it on a WMS study tour or know someone who has. Some are a little less familiar, so let me give you some background information. Madhya Pradesh has the lowest national nutritional indicators for women and children in India, which are reported to be worse than in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the 2011 UNICEF *Situation of Children in India* report, 60% of under five-year-old children in Madhya Pradesh are underweight for their age (32.7% moderate and 27.3% severe); 50% of children in the state are stunted (23.7% moderate and 26.3% severe); and 35% are under weight for their height (which is known as *"wasted"*; 22.4% moderate and 12.6% severe).

In Madhya Pradesh, "more than 70 per cent of almost 10 million child deaths every year are attributable to six causes: diarrhoea, malaria, neonatal infection, pneumonia, preterm delivery, or lack of oxygen at birth. Malnutrition is an underlying contributor in over half of these deaths. Children are dying because of the neglect of common and preventable childhood illnesses and lack of appropriate measures needed to protect mothers and infants during pregnancy and childbirth." (From the *Status Report on Children in Madhya Pradesh 2012*.)

Alirajpur district (where Jobat, Mendha, and Amkhut are located) is very poor with few government services, poor sanitation, high levels of corruption, and it has the lowest education rates of all districts in



Source: Statis report on children in MP (2012) at http://mpplanningcommission.gov.in

India. The district literacy rate is 36.1% and the district literacy rate for females is 30.3% (Madhya Pradesh's literacy rate is 69.32% and 59.24% for females; the national literacy rate is 74.04% and 65.46% for females). The economy is mainly dependent on agriculture. Seventy percent of the workforce are cultivators (predominately small holder farmers) and 20.09% are agricultural labourers.

Malnutrition in the Mendha area

Although most of the target community are farmers (92% of those surveyed in the baseline survey were farmers), malnutrition is a chronic problem in the project's target villages. Stunting is present in each generation. Anemia persists among women and children. The average meal a family consumes consists of maize-flour roti (this maize would be sold in the market for animal consumption rather than human consumption), watery yellow dahl (lentils), and rice. According to our baseline survey, about half of the households consume two meals a day and half consume three meals a day.

Malnutrition is the result of multiple factors (see image) and the proposed project plans to improve the nutritional status of families by working on these factors.

Inadequate food

Poverty is a strong driver of malnutrition in the Mendha area. Migration for work continues as cultivation is not possible for six or more months in the year due to lack of irrigation. Deforestation and degraded land due to increased use of chemicals and pesticides are affecting the food security and nutrition of these communities.

If approved, the proposed CRBHS Mendha Community Pilot Project will respond to the need for improved family nutrition by educating mothers on nutrition and specific diets during key times in growth and development, such as nutrition in pregnancy, nutrition for infants, and nutrition for children under five years of age.

The project will motivate women and mothers to establish kitchen gardens to increase the nutritional diversity in their family's diet. The kitchen gardens are intended to have a wider variety of vegetables than what is readily available for purchase within the community, as well as providing fruits and vegetables at a lower cost than purchasing these from the market.

Illness

The presence of common diseases also affects one's nutritional status. For example, malaria can cause anemia. Worms leech the body of nutrients that would otherwise be absorbed in the gastrointestinal tract. Diarrhoea can temporarily disrupt the nutrient balance and it can contribute to chronic malabsorption. The CRBHS recognises that good health is a requirement for good nutritional status (and vice versa). Therefore, the proposed Mendha Community Pilot Project will run general health camps as a means for detecting, treating, and referring patients with diseases. Education will be provided at the health camps on how to prevent common diseases which contribute to malnutrition.

Inadequate care to mother and child, and inadequate health care services

The project will target the important growth and development periods of infants and children, and also during pregnancy when good nutrition is essential especially during these times. It will work to motivate women to link with the government maternal and child health services at the village Anganwadi Centres (centers for pregnant women and mothers of children under five years old) to access nutrition and other health services. The project will promote the same nutritional messaging as the government programs, and will network with the government to help facilitate monthly immunization camps, ante-natal clinics, and post-natal clinics in each village. The baseline survey showed that 30% of women who gave birth in the year prior to the survey had at least one ante-natal clinic visit and less than 5% had the recommended number of ante-natal clinic visits. Twenty-seven percent of mothers reported receiving vaccination during pregnancy and 41% reported that their infants had received immunization.

The project also plans to target school-aged children

through school health check-ups and health education in primary and middle schools.

Unhygienic environment

Diarrhoea contributes to malnutrition by depleting nutrient absorption during diarrhoeal episodes, and through reduced nutrient absorption due to chronic inflammation of the intestinal lining after repeated cases of diarrhoea. If the latter is the case in young children, this can seriously impair their growth and development, further compounding the negative effects on their nutritional status.

Hand washing with soap can prevent one in three episodes of diarrhoea and can reduce life-threatening diarrhoea by 48% (WaterAid, 2015; Curtis and Cairncross, 2003). Promoting hand washing with soap is the single most cost effective intervention for reducing diarrhoeal morbidity (Curtis and Cairncross, 2003). In the absence of improved water facilities (e.g., piped water), such as in the villages around Mendha, hand washing with soap can still improve the health of the population. (Luby et al 2004; Curtis 2015)

A hand washing with soap campaign in the proposed Mendha project is planned to prevent diarrhoea among young children in hopes of preventing chronic malabsorption during the important early years of growth and development. Hygiene and sanitation campaigns/education will target mothers and children with the purpose of decreasing the incidence of disease and increasing the body's ability to absorb the nutrients it consumes.

Tapping into the potential of girls and women in Mendha

The CRBHS Mendha Community Pilot Project plans to target women and youth as these two groups have great potential for bringing about change in their community. The project will promote the status of females by encouraging women to step up their involvement and their effectiveness in their villages. Through the work with youth the project will promote equality and help young people to build respectful relationships and attitudes with females.

Pray with our partners

I offer thanksgivings for the support from all my Indian colleagues, contributions from Presbyterians Sharing which make my work possible, and above of all, for God's grace. I am thankful that the CRBHS team has completed a proposal that we pray will lead to the re-opening of the Mendha community project. I am also thankful for the new resident Vice Principal, Ms. Sharon Padamadan, at the MIBE Graduate School for Nurses. Please pray for the people of the Mendha area, that the Mendha Community Pilot Project will be approved, and for the Vice Principal to bring stability to the MIBE school. And pray that all my colleagues be blessed with God's protection, courage, and peace.

What is Mission?

by Katherine Allen

When I was in my 20s, while attending a Women's Missionary Society (WMS) meeting, someone said that we were all missionaries. I see the word 'mission' in everything we do—within our church, communities, and our support for mission work in Canada and overseas.

Recently I attended a memorial for Ida White, a former missionary of WMS and The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), who had served in India for 26 years. It reminded me of all the mission staff over the years and decades, who served or are still serving the church in many ways. As I listened to the many stories of their ministry to others, I developed a great admiration for their dedication and courage to provide the various skills needed to help others. These men and women took refuge in sharing their faith with many and guiding others to learn of God's strength, love, and wisdom.

I also saw the work of our mission staff while participating in two mission trips through the WMS/PCC. Our staff work tirelessly to provide for the various needs of others. On my trip to Eastern Europe, we visited schools run by the Reformed Church of the sub-Carpathian Ukraine, which receives funding from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. These schools give children a great start and a brighter future. We also visited the Terra Dei Agricultural Foundation, which is a model farm that teaches new techniques to increase agricultural yields. While spending a morning at the Terra Dei Agricultural Foundation, our group was able to serve this organization by picking beets, which help provide food for some of the schools and communities. This was a way our group participated in mission.

Another mission project that I was involved in was in my home church at that time. Around 2006, Flemingdon Park in Toronto was considered by the Ontario Government to be a high needs area. A few members of the Presbytery of East Toronto as well as the Gateway Community Church—my church that was located in this neighbourhood—looked at how to reach out to this community. In 2008, the after-school program of Gateway Flemingdon Mission was formed. It was a blessing to be actively involved in this ministry as a board member, and I also helped with the worship component of the ministry as well as the publicity.

The congregation of Gateway Community Church officially closed in September 2010, but the after-school program continued and was very successful in helping train youth to work with children, as part of their community service with the secondary school. Many of these children were new immigrants and several were from Afghanistan. The program helped them adjust to living in a strange land and to realize that Canada was a safe place. Volunteers helped the children with their homework and to understand the English language as well as develop self-esteem. Unfortunately in the Fall of 2014, the presbytery decided to discontinue this program, but I pray that other programs will have been developed to reach out to the children and youth in this community.

A very personal mission outreach for me is singing with the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus. As we have travelled to many places and churches, we have reached out to many people through our ministry of music. Sometimes we serve by providing entertainment for a special celebration, such as an anniversary, and other times we are hosted by groups to raise funds for special projects and missions. I love to see the faces of the audience as we serve God by lifting our voices in song.

There are so many needs in our world today and many churches are involved in helping with such things as food banks, and finding ways to reach out in their communities. We are constantly planting seeds to help nurture others so they can grow in their faith and as a person. In whatever way you serve, wherever you are, plant seeds and participate in God's mission in everything that you do.

Picking beets at the Terra Dei Agricultural Foundation

Mission Moments

by Cathy Reid

Mission has always been a large part of my life. My mother was my role model as a child. She lived her life to serve God by helping others, especially the elderly. Nothing was too much trouble for her. She always said God gave her the strength and the leading of the Holy Spirit to guide her as she volunteered to help those in need.

Growing up in the church allowed me to witness mission happening all around me, and I prayed that God would use me to help others. My first mission experience was as a teenager when I spent summers as a volunteer with the Church of Scotland Summer Mission Teams. We would spend two weeks living in a church hall and working with families on vacation in trailer sites in various parts of Scotland. The activities included vacation bible camp each day with the children, youth cafes, and visiting the families in their trailers to share God's love. Mind you, we did have an interesting mission moment when the minister's wife asked us if we were "Practical Christians." Not knowing what to say we said yes and we were immediately asked to clean the drains!

Student mission followed, and this proved to be a good learning experience. Working with youth isn't always easy especially when they open up about an abusive situation. It was on one of these missions that I got to know my future husband. Working with children, youth, and adults

prepared us for our ministry both in Scotland and Canada. God gave us many opportunities to serve in our communities and also surprises us with new horizons. We certainly never envisaged that our ministry would lead us to accept a call to a church in Canada. This meant leaving all our family in Scotland, but God prepared a new church family for us in Canada and this made it easier to adapt to life in a new country. However, learning the new language was not always as easy!

It has been wonderful to be part of the congregation of New St. James in London for the last few years. New St. James has a long history of mission and service to others, and has a number of mission programs that they are involved in locally. I especially enjoy being part of the Out of the Cold program and the local foodbank. Serving in our own communities is sometimes harder than serving overseas. God continues to show us new ways to serve in London and the surrounding area.

I have always been interested in the people and the situation in Malawi since I was a student. When I gave up teaching, I had the opportunity to go to Malawi on a WMS exposure tour in 2009. Even though I had done a lot of preparation and praying for the people in Malawi, I was still surprised at the poverty that exists there. What I didn't expect was the joy that the people have and how they are willing to share everything they have even though they have nothing. I loved working with the children and teaching them games and songs. It was difficult to see their illnesses, especially HIV/AIDS, and not be able to offer help. I enjoyed worshipping in their congregations and experiencing the joy and love they have for God. They literally will start dancing and singing during the services. This was amazing and I found myself right there with them as they expressed their love for God.

One village in particular spoke to me because they had no place to meet with the orphans and vulnerable children. They were unable to use the church because of the number of funerals that were taking place.

When we visited, we saw a pile of bricks that the village had made. We asked what they were for and we were told that they were planning to build a children's centre when they could afford to buy the other supplies needed. How long had the bricks been there? Three years was the reply! I could not get this pile of bricks out of my mind. Two other ladies from my own congregation were also on the tour and felt exactly as I did.

When we returned to London, we prayed a lot about the situation and wondered if we could help the village. We wrote to Glenn Inglis to ask if the village wanted us to help and we received an encouraging letter back. We thought it would take us a long time to raise the funds, but we were able to do it in six months through very generous donations. Glenn acted as our liaison with the village chief and plans were drawn.

In 2011, Lyn, Pat, and I were invited back to Chipagala for the official opening of the Timvane Centre. I can't express in words the joy it was to share in this occasion with the families in Chipagala. We were made to feel like royalty! I think the Chief's words summed it up when through a translator she said, "We used to be a forgotten village, now we have been blessed with a new centre for our most vulnerable children." Serving God has many blessings and this was certainly a wonderful one.

Since then, we have been back in Malawi in 2013 and we are now planning to go this September. We have been welcomed with open arms, and we have experienced real joy in sharing in worship, and working with children, youth, and adults. This tour will see us working with the Rev. Silas Ncozana in Chuluchosema and the Rev. Dennis Muele in Chipagala and Blantyre synods. They have become very good friends and keep us up to date with what is happening in the congregations and villages. As a former teacher I enjoy the opportunity to visit schools. We are very conscious of the fact that we must not impose ourselves on the people. We work with them on needs they have identified.

God has given me so many opportunities to work with the people in Malawi and I have been blessed more by them than I have been able to help them. As I pray for my Malawian friends, I am constantly reminded of Jesus' words to his disciples to go out and share the gospel with others. What a joy to be able to do that!

Mission

by Karen Wasacase

My emotions began like this:
Yea, asked to write for Glad Tidings...
Boo, I am crazy in trying to write something for Glad Tidings...

So, I talked to some family and friends who gave the best advice—pray. So here it goes, Dear Lord be in my heart and words as I write about mission.

I have been very blessed in my life with parents who have a strong sense of mission. My first memory of mission took place at Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School. One day a truck arrived filled with lots of boxes. Most of us would be thinking oh no. but not my mother. She was so excited. I remember asking her what was so special about the boxes. She told me that people had sent clothes that they no longer needed for the children. As a child, I saw this as others helping. My first definition of mission came from this experience—helping others.

My second memory of mission came along one Halloween. My sister Sheila and I went trick or treating when we were living in Yellowknife. We came home with four pillowcases filled with candy and we were in candy heaven. My father talked to us about sharing our candy with children who were not as lucky as us. He told us about our cousins in Saskatchewan who were not able to go trick or treating. So we packed up a box of candy and sent it off to Saskatchewan. My second

definition of mission came from this experience—sharing with others.

My third memory of mission occurred when my parents were working at the Kenora Fellowship Centre. My sisters and I would often go and help on weekends or after school. I am not sure how much help we were when all we really loved to do was make coffee and cup of soup for the people who came to the centre. But, while serving in this way, I learned that there are many people with various needs, but often they really just need someone to play a game, talk, or just spend time with them. My third definition of mission is giving of my time to others.

Lucky for me, mission has been a part of my life whether it has been when I have helped others or when people have helped me. Mission is a two-way street. We give to others whether it is our time, talent, or funds but we receive far more than we give. When I went off to university, a lively family believed it was their mission to give rides to students to church each Sunday. Their mission was very helpful for me in my personal growth with God. Our Lord says to love each other as he loves us. If we can teach others that the Lord loves them through our deeds of generosity, time, and faith, we are doing our best mission.

Mission is not always a planned event. Sometimes we get it wrong. And, sometimes new ideas for mission, come when we least expect it. The other morning when I was delivering papers, a man, who to my amazement was up at 4 a.m. asked me stop walking on his lawn as he spends $600 to $800 on feeding and maintaining this lawn. As I continued to deliver the papers I started thinking. What a waste of money! Our society seems to have gone crazy over having a perfect lawn, when there are so many other needs out there. We feed our lawns when so many people in the world are starving.

So here is my new mission. I want to educate people. I want to somehow get people to realize that we need to feed the children of the world, not our grass. I am not sure how I will do this, but I will start by telling people my thought and that is a beginning.

So, today, as I write for Glad Tidings, *these are my thoughts and ideas about mission. May the Lord our God fill you with many thoughts and ideas on how to reach out with love.*

"Seize the Hope

Reconciliation to me is about not having to say sorry a second time.

Cindy Blackstock

Opening Prayer

Please pray for all our Canadian indigenous sisters.
Pray for the families of all the missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada.
Pray for Indigenous girls many of whom are growing up in deep poverty in Canada.

Let us pray:
Loving and forgiving Creator of us all,
You are here in our midst.
Open our hearts and minds to the issues that Indigenous women in Canada are facing today.
Fill us with understanding and compassion.

God of love and mercy,
be with all Canadian Indigenous girls and women.

and "Burst Forth"

by Margaret Mullin

A study about Canadian indigenous sisters.

"Education is what got us here and education is what will get us out."
TRC Chair Justice Murray Sinclair

Help them to Seize the Hope that Jesus offers and help them to Burst Forth from the generational effects of Colonization and the Residential School system here in Canada.

Holy Spirit come.
Ignite your flame within us as we struggle to find ways to reconcile with our Indigenous sisters.
Help us try and fail and try again until we get it right.
Fill our Indigenous sisters with Your Spirit. Help them to tell their stories and expose the truth to us. Help them to heal. Help those who are living in deep poverty discover Hope and begin to make a way for their grandchildren to stay in school and break the generational bonds of poverty.

We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

Justice involves protecting the rights of others. It protests against everything that destroys human dignity. ~Living Faith 8.4.3

Introduction:

As you will see, I have not developed this study in a traditional way.

There are many excellent resources already available through The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) Justice Ministries Committee and the PCC Healing and Reconciliation Committee that can take you into a deeper study about Aboriginal/Indigenous history in Canada if you so choose.

I do highly recommend that you read the three following resources and reflect on how you or your group can participate in the ongoing Healing and Reconciliation movement our Church is currently involved in. The truth has been told. Recommendations have been made. Consider, how we, how you, can move forward from here as you learn more through the following resources:

1. In 1994 The Presbyterian Church in Canada confessed to God and to the Aboriginal People, its role in the tragic legacy of residential schools. Have you read the apology? Is there a copy displayed in your church? You can download a copy of the Confession at http://presbyterian.ca/resources-hr/
2. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People [UNDRIP] and Canada's response to it, by visiting: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1309374407406/1309374458958
3. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada calls to Action. These can be found at: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

For this study, I will simply offer you some personal reflections and one real life story to consider. I have been working at Winnipeg Inner City Missions since 1999. During that time, I have ministered to many broken Indigenous

women. I have walked with them, often for years, through their pain and forward through their healing journeys. Unfortunately, some of them have died too young as a result of violence against them or of suicides as early as 12 years of age.

These women, real women that I know and love deeply, have been broken by a long history of Colonization and the Indian Residential School System.

Canada's social systems, the systems that are meant to help them, have often failed them.

These women are resilient, they are survivors, and they have a very strong spirit. It has been a blessing for me to journey with them through their circumstances. The difficult work these women are doing now, recovering their lost identity as Indigenous people, healing from their past and present wounds, forgiving, and moving forward to the abundant life that God has waiting for them, will help break the cycles of poverty and violence for their grandbabies and great grandbabies.

I challenge all women who have eyes to see and ears to hear to get personally involved in the ongoing work of healing and reconciliation between the Church and Canada's Indigenous People. By participating in this study, you have already begun or continued on that journey. Thanks be to God.

First, let us invite God's Spirit to come among us.

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (NRSV)

Hymn:

#399: Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness (If this is not a familiar hymn to you, please simply read it as poetry.)

Read the Word:

Psalm 91:1, and 14-16

Reflect of the Word:

In silence, on your own, consider the words, "Whoever lives under the shadow of the most high," Who is 'whoever'?

Now consider the words, "Because you love me,"

Who is you? Who is me?

Share in groups of two or three:

First, allow each person to share their own reflections on those words one at a time while the others just listen. Then, discuss together this question: Does whoever include all Canadian Indigenous women?

Pray:

Pray together in your small group that you personally and all Canadian Indigenous women will call on the One God of Love and grow to love God more deeply.

Karen's Story:

From Broken to Free, A painful and liberating journey

Karen is an indigenous woman trying to survive as a single Mom

in dire poverty conditions in a neighbourhood riddled with crime. Karen first came to Winnipeg Inner City Missions (WICM) to attend a community Bible study that was being held by Warren Whittaker at Flora House in the north end of the city. At that time, Karen had one biological son and three adopted children. These four range in age from 20 to 24 years old now. One day, Karen brought her 18-month old biological grandson with her to Bible Study while our Parish Social worker was also setting up for the weekly Learning and Play Program (LAPP).

Karen asked if she could attend the program and began to come to LAPP regularly with her biological son's 18-month- old baby. She literally soaked up everything she could about parenting, about teaching the child from an early age, and about talking to kids so they will listen. She wished something like the program WICM offers now had been available to her when her children were born.

Karen practised what she was being taught on her older children who were all still at home, and soon she began to see a positive change in how she was relating to them.

After a year or so in the LAPP program, Karen began fostering three more young children aged 2, 4, and 6 years. The girls had already been sexually abused.

Shortly after that, Karen's teenage adopted daughter became pregnant and she stayed in Karen's home for support. All the foster children and grandchildren came to LAPP with Karen. The youngest is now in grade two. All four of the younger children now attend a First Nations school in Winnipeg and they are receiving awards there that encourage their further learning. One of her older children is in university now.

Karen tells everyone that being taught one-on-one during the LAPP program time, and having access to the Parish Social Worker weekly to help guide her through the multitude of personal and social problems that she encountered was life changing for her. She in turn was able to help her children heal and grow also.

Along the way, Karen became unhappy with her own First Nations Christian Church which was speaking and praying against her Aboriginal Spiritual traditions. She left that church six years ago to join WICM's worshipping community.

TRC event, Ottawa, 2015, PCC Communications

It has been a long and hard journey for Karen from brokenness to freedom. Karen talks about slowly breaking free from her past and from the anger and unforgiveness that she was holding in her heart. During the Presbyterian Church's Women's Gathering entitled Burst Forth, Karen received a great breakthrough in that part of her healing journey.

When the Place of Hope Presbyterian Church was constituted last November, Karen was elected by the people and ordained as a Ruling Elder. Karen still brings all the younger children with her for Sunday school. She teaches the middle Sunday school class in rotation with other parents and grandparents.

Karen is now seeing the needs around her through Jesus' eyes, and she is reaching out to support and help others in the community. Karen volunteers now at LAPP, passing on her wisdom and encouragement to other Moms and Grandmas. She is also volunteering on a full-time basis to keep the WICM community store open.

There are many Karen's out there, some are finding their way, while others are still lost.

Hymn:

#590: We have this ministry (sing or read)

In closing, I quote the words of Lori Ransom, former Healing and Reconciliation Animator for The Presbyterian Church in Canada: "Reconciliation is not a solitary endeavour, reconciliation is between, at minimum, two people. (It) involves putting right what is wrong between peoples. At the heart of our faith,

we are called to be reconcilers as Christ reconciled us to God, and taught us to love our neighbours as ourselves. Reconciliation requires transformation of how our nation thinks of its history and of the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples."

Pray:

God of all people, Great Spirit, Holy One, hear our prayer.
Give your blessing this day to Karen and to other women like her.
Guide us and guide all Canadian Indigenous women in a good way.
Help us guide our children and grandchildren in Your Way of love.
Help us to find ways to walk together in the coming years on a healing journey towards reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and the Church.
Guide us to a future where our great grandbabies will benefit from a common commitment to peace, equity, and justice. Amen

More on WICM:

I believe that Winnipeg Inner City Missions matter and that people like Karen who live here need a person in their lives that care, that can love unconditionally, and that believe that with God's help the person can make a difference for good in their own family and in the community they live in.

Generational poverty is only one of the negative effects of Colonization and the Indian Residential School System. Our goal at Winnipeg Inner City Missions is to help our families reverse the damage done in generations past.

At Winnipeg Inner City Missions, we operate a community outreach program, a food bank, the Learning and Play Program, the After School Programs for ages 6-14, a Transitional Supportive Housing Project for single people between 30 and 50 years of age, and Place of Hope Presbyterian Church. Please visit our website, www.wicm.ca, for more detailed information.

Rev. Margaret Mullin serves as the Executive Director of Winnipeg Inner City Missions and as the Minister of Place of Hope Presbyterian Church.

---

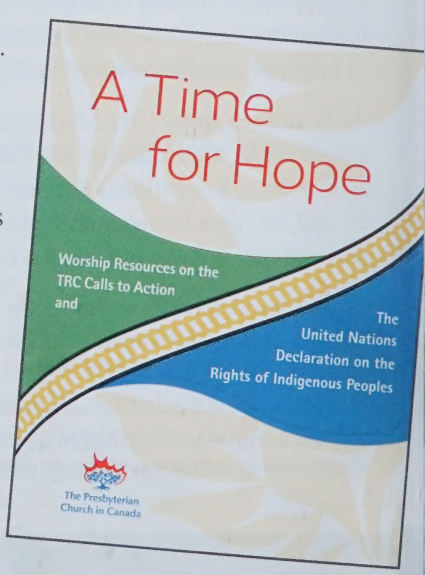
[i] Visit the websites for PCC Justice Ministries at http://presbyterian.ca/justice/, and Healing and Reconciliation at http://presbyterian.ca/healing/.

A Time for Hope

This is a great resource for congregations and WMS groups. It contains resources for two complete worship services, and these materials could also be used at WMS meetings. Although they are organized as worship services, most of the materials can be used on their own as part of other gatherings. This would allow a group to personalize their experience and use it at one, or even several, meetings.

The first service focuses on the Truth and Reconciliations Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action. I found the Introduction to Healing and Reconciliation particularly helpful. For those with little knowledge of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action, this provides a brief introduction. I also loved how this resource takes some of the specific calls to action and provides an accompanying prayer. Perhaps your WMS group would consider reading one of these at each of your WMS meetings throughout the year.

The second service looks at the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This resource provides a powerful Prayer of Thanksgiving, written by Binesikwe (Thunderbird Woman) Cathy Lindsay, an indigenous elder in Kenora. Again, there are some wonderful aspects of this service that can be used as part of the full-service, or just on its own. This time, some of the articles from the declaration are presented, followed with personal stories from friends across the church. Again, these could be used on their own at WMS meetings throughout the year.


A Time for Hope
Worship Resources on the TRC Calls to Action and
The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

I encourage you to look at the resource, use all or part of it at your meeting, and be certain your minister or worship leadership are also aware of it.

A Time for Hope is available for free download at: http://presbyterian.ca/healing/

Wills that Changed the World

William the Conqueror
Conquered England
and turned the King's English into French

William Tyndale
Translated the Bible into English

William Shakespeare
English playwright and poet

William Penn
English Quaker who founded Pennsylvania
on the principle of religious freedom

William Gates
Founder of Microsoft and co-founder of
The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Alfred Nobel
Inventor of dynamite and founder of the Nobel Prizes

Surprised to find an Alfred among all the Wills? You shouldn't be. Sometimes our Last Will and Testament can be our most lasting legacy. Alfred Nobel's will changed his legacy from "the man who invented dynamite" to "the man who founded the Nobel Prizes". With a stroke of his pen, Nobel changed the way we remember him, and turned the destructive power of dynamite into a force to help build a better world!

What will your legacy be?

e Presbyterian Church in Canada
wardship & Planned Giving
Wynford Dr. Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
00-619-7301
sbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/willsandbequests

proVisionaries
Planting seeds of hope. For generations to come.

Small Intervention equals Big Impact in

by Erin Whittaker

India can be an intense and overwhelming place. From the moment I stepped out of the airport in Delhi, I was greeted by the rush of people, the sound of thousands upon thousands of car horns, and a thick blanket of smoky smog which covered the city in a grey haze. It was 2 a.m. in the morning, and after months of prep time, but only ten days notice of the actual dates, I found myself in Delhi. It was twelve thousand kilometres from, and fifty degrees warmer than Winnipeg. I had arrived.

For those who have traveled to India, I know you will remember that first feeling of walking out into the oppressive air of Delhi and having no idea what you've just gotten yourself into. And of course, that's just the beginning. There is so much to experience in India. I went to India in January 2016 as a member of the Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) national committee for a monitoring trip, with one of our PWS&D program coordinators, Leah Adema.

For almost four weeks we visited a variety of programs in and around the Vindhya Satpura region of India, also known in the church as the Bhil Field. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has had missions/outreach in this area of India for well over one hundred years. Monitoring visits have a few goals. They help build relationships between PWS&D and our partners and also make up part of the financial accountability structure. Through monitoring, we

can ensure that the gifts and donations of Canadian Presbyterians are being used responsibly to impact the lives of real people.

One of the most important things I learned in India, is that sometimes the simple interventions are the ones that make the most difference. In India in the past, the church's interventions tended to be on a large scale, for example, I learned that the Presbyterian Church in Canada had been responsible for some of the road maintenance on the roads between the church outposts and health outposts, as opposed to the local Government taking responsibility for this. Also, programs run by the Church of North India provided a large percentage of available, quality health care as well as providing elementary and secondary education in the Vindhya Satpura region. Things have changed in India, however, and the country is no longer as reliant on foreign aid to meet the basic, everyday, needs of its citizens, and in many ways, this is the ideal outcome of years and years of development work.

Yet, there is still important work we continue to be involved in. The most recent PWS&D funded project in Northern India, was a three year project called the Community Health and Self Reliance Project. This project aimed to improve health outcomes and the ability of communities to support themselves. The Central Regional Board of Health Services of the Church of North India coordinated this work in 27 villages.

As we visited some of these villages, one of the interventions that the project beneficiaries seemed most excited about were NADAP tanks. A NADAP tank is an effective way of making organic fertilizer at a much faster rate than simply putting

compost in a pile. It's also long lasting and sustaining since once the tank is constructed it can be used for many years. The idea is simple. You build a rectangular, concrete tank with ventilation holes. The tank is then layered with manure and biological matter and within six months this can be used as compost. Multiple farmers shared with us that the organic compost had made a big difference in their fields and not only worked well, but is more cost effective than buying chemical fertilizers. It seemed that in every village we visited, someone was excited to show us their tank and share with us the difference it had made in their lives.

Visiting India reminded me that in the overwhelming midst of a billion people, amid cows, stray dogs, and goats, in the midst of industry and squalor, under the cover of smog, change can happen. Change happens because of the small things we do.

Another small intervention which is making a huge difference in the lives of families living in poverty is women's self help groups. Interested women gather in groups of ten to twelve on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis, and save money together. Although the groups make their own rules, in terms of meeting frequency, the amount contributed, and interest rates, the idea behind it is the same. At each meeting, the women gather and contribute a small amount of money to the group. They also hear proposals from within the group for loans. To put things in Canadian dollars, if a group of twelve women met each week and each contributed $2, after one week, you would have $24.00, which in theory could be loaned to a group member to buy a new shirt to attend job interview. The following week she would not only provide her $2, but also begin repaying her loan, along with interest. If the group did not make any loans until they had a larger amount, they could make loans for bigger and bigger things. In India we met women who had taken loans for livestock, the collateral to start a small business, and for supplies to make handiwork to sell at the market.

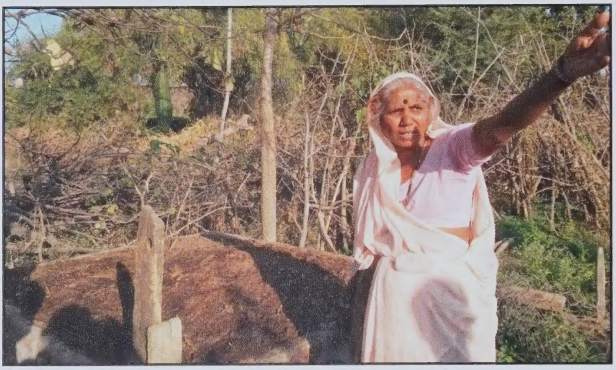
One of the amazing things about these groups, is that after the initial training, they are self managing and do not require outside aid to continue functioning. Some of the groups that have been meeting for a long time (think years and years) actually command quite a lot of financial power and are able to make a big difference in the well being of not just their families, but their entire community as well!

Beyond finances, women who

gather together also provide each other with much needed social support. The Bhil people tend to build their houses at a distance from each other and villages can be quite spread out. Some of the villages that the project works in are also inaccessible by road, making communication with the area at large rather difficult. Self help groups give women the chance to talk about the things which affect them all, topics such as school fees, illness, gardening, or alcoholism among family members. Women are expected to be present at every group meeting (there is a penalty for missing a group) and this means that they have a regular source of connection and someone will notice if they are not there and can come check on them and their family. We met with many self help groups, some of whom had even made matching saris. Belonging is a fundamental human need and these groups help to provide just that.

As I mentioned previously, India has come a long way in terms of government assistance and programming to help its citizens. As with anything, the service delivery system is not perfect. It can be difficult to access, full of paper work and forms, and not particularly user friendly. This means that even though there may be a government scheme in existence to help people with watershed activities, to build latrines, or to help grow drought resistant crops, local villagers may not know they exist and often don't always have the literacy skills to access them.

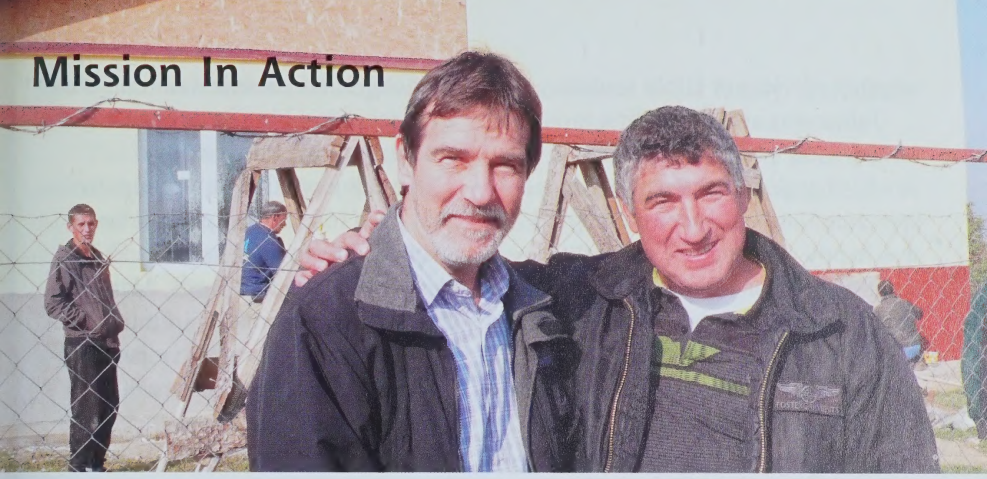
Perhaps even more importantly, most of the people we met did not believe that they were "good enough" to access them. Because of their low status in the community they feared that they would not receive support. Therefore, one of the activities of the



Community Health and Self Reliance project was to help connect villagers to these already existing programs. In one village, due to the help of the project staff, the community was able to connect to a government water expert. This expert helped them identify where to construct damns and where to build up soil so that during the monsoon rains the water table would lift and their dry wells would be filled. They were excited to show us the difference this had made after only one year. Their hope was that after only one more monsoon their wells and pumps would run again. Other government schemes help repair hand pumps, provide transportation for women in labour to a health centre, and provide money for female children.

Visiting India reminded me that in the overwhelming midst of a billion people, amid cows, stray dogs, and goats, in the midst of industry and squalor, under the cover of smog, change can happen. Change happens because of the small things we do. It happens when relationships are built and maintained over time, one person at a time, one community at a time. It happens when people are given the tools to support themselves and guide themselves and their families in the way they wish to go, even when it may not look like "my" way. One of the things I most value about the work of Presbyterian World Service & Development is that our projects rely on local partners and local people, not staff sent in from Canada, so programming can be culturally appropriate and tailored to exactly what communities need.

Visiting India reminded me that not only *can* change happen, but that change *is* happening. As I visited hospitals, churches, and schools I was struck by the long lasting impact of Presbyterian Missionaries and the WMS in the lives of local people; everywhere I turned there were small reminders of the Canadian church's long standing presence in India. Though our involvement in India has changed over time, I am assured that our shared past has helped contribute to a future full of goodness and promise. I am so grateful that I am a part of a church that is making a difference not just at home, but across the world.



Roma Ministry in Nagydobrony, May 2016
David and Anna Pandy-Szekeres

Julius is our always-smiling colleague, a teacher in the Roma kindergarten of Nagydobrony, Transcarpathia, Ukraine. In 2015, with support from Presbyterians Sharing, they were able to expand and put a new roof on the Roma kindergarten building. This building is also used by the Roma congregation of Nagydobrony for their meetings.

Julius is 44 years old, married and has five children. He was born into a Hungarian-speaking Roma family where his Christian mother read the Bible to her children in the evenings. Julius was brought up knowing about God's love, but it took a long time before he would answer God's call. Julius married at an early age and became a father, but chose unconventional methods to provide for his family and was put in prison. "I was praying there, but I did not know God yet," he remembers.

When he was released in 2000, Gizella and Jenő started to give Bible lessons for the Roma community. Gizella is a passionate Christian woman who was among the first to "minister" to the members of the Roma community in Nagydobrony. Jenő is a member of the Roma community who often took on leadership roles when neither a pastor nor a missionary was available to lead

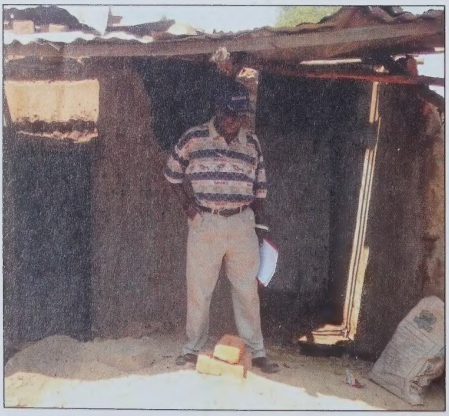
worship services or Bible studies.

Julius was among the first to answer God's call and with his newly-changed life he was eager to serve the Lord in his community. "I was happy to accept the request to serve as the worship leader of the community on Sundays and to be the kindergarten teacher for little children on weekdays," shares Julius. "I am thankful to God for David who continuously supports us by maintaining the building, purchasing firewood, and helping us give warm meals to the little ones."

We who witness his life, praise Jesus for the gift that has been given through this smiling servant to the Roma community of Nagydobrony.

Floods in Malawi, May 2016
Joel and Rebecca Sherbino

From December 2014 to January 2015, Malawi experienced some of the longest and heaviest rainfall it had ever seen, resulting in devastating flooding all over the country.



Gibson is one of the volunteers that helps oversee the reconstruction. He is standing in one of the homes destroyed by the floods.

In January 2015, it was reported that over 150,000 people had been displaced from their homes and 70 people killed in the floods. Many homes—built primarily of mud and clay—were swept away, or partially destroyed. A country where 80% of families rely on subsistence agriculture for their basic survival, the heavy rains wiped out the crops in 17 districts.

For the handicapped members of Tidzalerana, where Rebecca has been working this past year, the floods were terrifying as the whole urban slum of Ndirande township (two minutes from where we live) was affected. This was in addition to the damaged houses and leaking roofs. There was no water or power for days.

Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) responded to this National Disaster by sending $10,000 for reconstruction efforts for those members of Tidzalerana. This year, along with four volunteers, Rebecca has helped monitor the reconstruction efforts.

Greetings from India
by Michelle Verwey

The Mendha Local Committee (a committee of pastors and community members working together in Vindhya-Saptura to try to re-open the Mendha Community Health Centre) have asked me to send a letter of

condolence and remembrance of Ida White to you on their behalf.

"The Mendha Local Committee and all those in the Vindhya Satpura Area, were greatly sadden to hear of Miss Ida White's passing in early April. Miss White is remembered by so many in Jobat, Mendha, Amkhut, and countless villages in the area. What she is remembered for the most is her love for others and her trust in God. Unfailingly, Miss White showed Christ's love to everyone—the young, the old, the down trodden—everyone without exception. Her home was always open to everyone. Many stayed with her in their hour of need, including newly widowed women and those experiencing family troubles. She sheltered many, fed many, and bathed many herself.

On behalf of the people of Vindhya Saptura we send our deepest condolences to her family, and fondly remember her love for our people that was a living example of God's love among us. Rest in peace Miss Ida White with the God you loved so much."

The Mendha Local Committee members are as follows:

- Reverend Emmanuel Ariel – Chairman (Pastor at Jobat, Vice President of Bhopal Diocese CNI, Dean of Vindhya Satpura Area)
- Rev. Suresh Kharadi – Secretary (Pastor at Mendha)
- Mr. Amon – Treasurer
- Dr. Deborah Tezlo – member
- Miss Pauline Brown - member
- Ms. Mercy Ravikant – member (retired nurse, Mendha)
- Mrs. Kamala – member (Mendha community member)
- Miss Flora Kaleb – member

Ida White during her time in India.

In the Society

Synodical

Saskatchewan Women's Missionary Society Annual Meeting was held on April 16 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Saskatoon.

We began our day with singing led by Joan Sande and Gerri Madill. Merle McGowan and Jean Jones then led the Opening Worship. Our theme for the day was Come and See from John 1:39.

Susan McLennan, National President of the Women's Missionary Society, was our guest speaker. Susan spoke about her visit to Guatemala and the work being done by the local women in the mountain area. She showed photos of that area of Guatemala. Then Susan gave us some good insight on the new outreach arm of the WMS, Women to Women and The HUB. This was of great interest to us as our two WMS groups in Saskatoon are all that remains of the WMS in Saskatchewan.

After lunch, we had more singing and our Co-Presidents, Arline Sanderson and Marina Onclin, conducted the business part of our program. We still will promote the two WMS Together We Can! projects, and are committed to the WMS General Fund.

Where do we go from here? How can we attract busy younger women? Actually for several years the WMS women have quietly arranged Women's Breakfasts five times each year, and a Women's Camp at Christopher Lake each September. We have attracted women who were not involved in the WMS, some

WE RESPOND
Inspired by God's Promise of Abundant Life...
PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.
Be a part of this vision. Donate Today.
Presbyterian World Service & Development
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
WeRespond.ca

United Church women, and some younger women. We hope to connect these and others to Women to Women and The HUB. Hopefully some more women will hear about us and be interested in going to the National Women's Gathering in Richmond Hill, ON, in 2017.

The 69th Annual Meeting of the Synodical of **South Western Ontario** was held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Sarnia on April 19–20.

After a rousing hymn sing, constitution of the meeting by President Shirley Miller and welcome from Kim Walko, President of the host presbyterial and the local WMS group, the Rev. Lloyd Murock, assisted by his wife, the Rev. Shirley, led a meaningful service of worship and communion.

During the afternoon, we heard from the Rev. Sarah Kim who updated us about the upcoming Women's Gathering in May 2017. Alexis McKeown talked about the Women's Hub, the new web presence for women to share ideas and experiences. It is a way to reach women who are not part of the WMS. Then, the Rev. Deb Rapport gave a report on the ministry of ARISE, one of our Together We Can! projects this year. Shirley Miller and Susan McLelland spoke of their WMS visit

to Guatemala last October and they gave us an excellent idea of what they learned there from the women.

On Tuesday evening, we all enjoyed a delicious roast beef dinner, and entertainment by a group called The Joyful Noise from London. They entertained us with their African songs.

The speaker on Wednesday morning was Katharine Masterton from the Justice Ministries. Twenty volunteers participated in the Blanket exercise, which gave the women an idea of how Canada has treated the Aboriginal Peoples—robbing them of their land, and through residential schools robbing children of their parents, language, and culture. We hope the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation committee will be carried out.

We always are inspired by the Rev. Theresa Macdonald-Lee's report from Camp Kintail. So much is happening there besides just children's camping—retreats for young people, crafters, and others are held on weekends. Two capital projects which require fund raising are a new bath house, and a new building which would house a Welcome Centre, Office, and Guest facilities.

This year the Synodical has new officers: Cathy Reid from London takes over as President, Kathryn Tew is Recording Secretary, and Winn Files is Corresponding Secretary.

Although attendance was down this year, all enjoyed having fellowship together and the hospitality of the women in Sarnia.

Presbyterial

Bruce-Grey WMS Presbyterial held their Annual Meeting on April 6 at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Owen Sound, ON, with the theme, Renewing Our Soul.

The Rev. Dana Benson and Gerry Langlois, President of the

The annual Presbyterian gathering of the three Presbyterian Churches in Sault St. Marie ON (Westminster, St. Paul's, and Victoria) met on Saturday, Feb. 20, 2016.

Owen Sound WMS group, extended a warm welcome. Pat Edwards, President of the Presbyterial, opened the meeting and then the WMS women from Glammis conducted a meaningful Worship Service.

Pat Edwards conducted the business: roll call was taken, reports were read and adopted, and up-coming events announced. A discussion took place regarding the absence of a Vice President and the vacancy of the President's position in 2017. The possibility of rotating this position among the groups was looked at and this option will need further investigation. Then, Sally MacDonald led a fun exercise session which got everyone moving and stretching.

L-R Jane Hutchinson, Shirley Copeland, Lynda Morley, Margo Kopp, Shirley Miller in Paris Presbyterian Church.

Our guest speaker was Lawrence Pentelow, Director of Crieff Hills. He gave a slide presentation showing the beautiful grounds and buildings on this unique property, which was donated to the Presbyterian Church in 1950 by Col. J.B. MacLean (founder of MacLean publishing company). The property was developed as a conference centre and retreat for the Presbyterian Church in 1975. A retreat provides education and a place to restore/renew and build community. It is a mental and physical break that restores one's spirits and energy. While enjoying nature, you can seek God's place in your life and become stronger and more able to face the world. Crieff Hills receives no financial support from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Many groups, such as churches, WMS groups, schools, and non-religious organizations, use the facility along with individuals and families. It is located within a two-hour drive from many cities and towns which is convenient.

~Linda Doll

The women of the **Waterloo-Wellington** Presbyterial WMS met for their Spring Rally on May 2 at Rockwood Presbyterian Church. Our

hosts, the Twilight Evening Auxiliary, greeted us with delicious refreshments which were enjoyed by all.

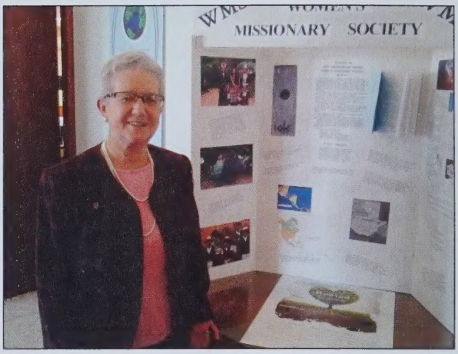
Eloise Gardiner opened the meeting with devotions. The offering will be used to ship knitted pneumonia vests to the Bhil people in India, our project.

President, Dr. Wilma Welsh introduced our speaker, Janet Brewer, former national WMS treasurer, who painted a vivid word picture for us of her trip to Afghanistan in 2013. Through PWS&D and partnering with a local agency, Church World Service, we support various programs there including food security projects, health facilities, and education of women and girls. It was a thought-provoking glimpse of a war-ravaged country where life is a struggle at all times. Every bit of help that we can give is appreciated ten-fold.

Following courtesies, offered by Donna Henry, the meeting was closed with prayer by the president.

Local

Mission Awareness Sunday provided an occasion for the WMS auxiliary in Paris Presbyterian to recycle several pins. The pins were passed along from Barbara McDonald, a 91-year-old faithful member who is confined to her home. On her behalf, Jane Hutchinson presented WMS pins to Shirley Copeland, secretary; Margo Kopp, treasurer; Lynda Morley, hospitality convenor; and an honorary membership pin to Shirley Miller, auxiliary and outgoing South Western Ontario Synodical President.



The WMS group at Knox Presbyterian Church St. Thomas has been studying Guatemala and ways we can partner to help the Maya Mam women there. Mission Awareness Sunday at Knox raised $1700 for the Together We Can! project.

Photo: Ruby Leverton with the WMS display

Recognition certificates were presented to the Nicaragua Mission team and librarians Karen Cameron and Wil Hennink, all volunteers in the church.

A delicious Pot Luck dinner commenced the May meeting of the Arthur Circle WMS group at Knox-Goderich. We were pleased to host our Synodical President Shirley Miller, who presented a slide show on her recent visit to Guatemala.

The Arthur Circle group holds a Christmas Cookie Walk each November and this past year we were able to send over $500 from this event to the women of Guatemala.

Remembering

Thelma McIntyre
Isobel Peters
Calvin Presbyterian
Ladies Guild,
Abbotsford BC

Helen Hamilton
Knox Presbyterian
Women,
Bobcaygeon ON

Margaret Gentle
Burlington East WMS,
Burlington ON

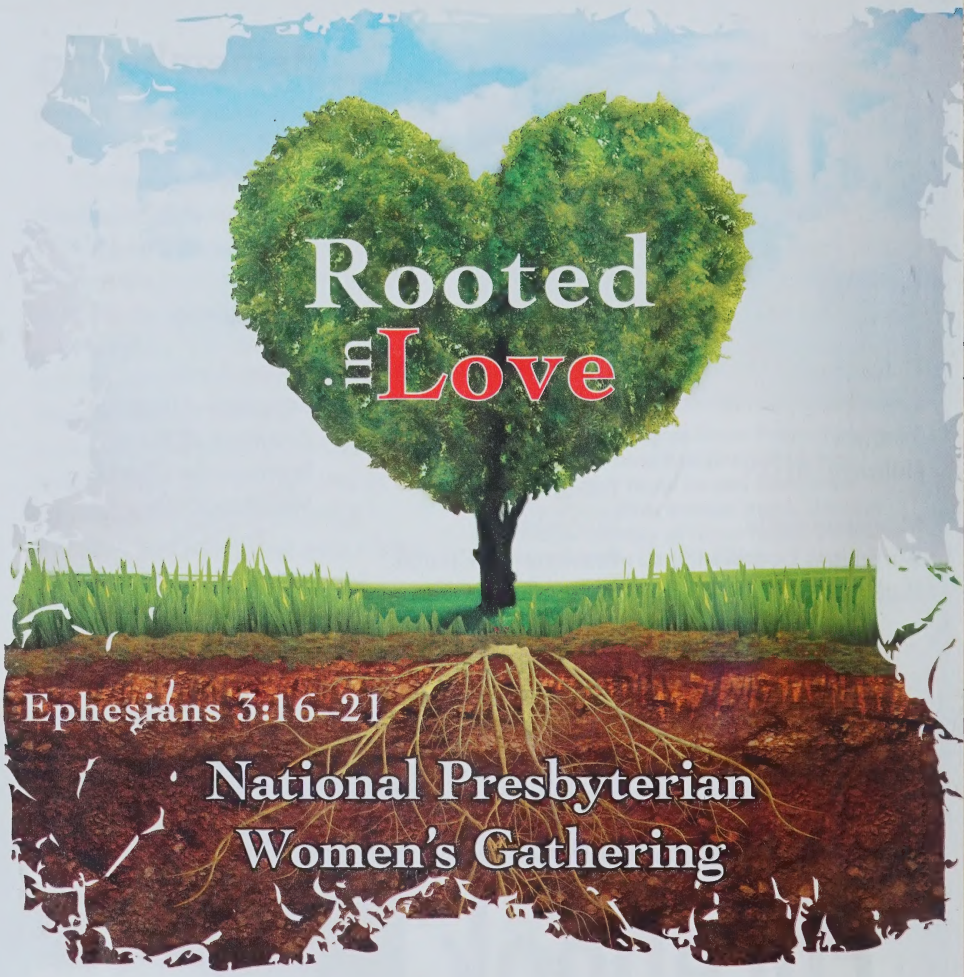
Sheila E. Bailey
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian,
Markham ON

Shirley Johnson
Ruth McLean Auxiliary,
St. Andrew's,
Petrolia ON

Lillian Reesor
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian Church,
Scarborough ON

Emily Westelaken
St. Andrew's-Chalmers
Presbyterian Church
WMS,
Uxbridge ON

Elaine Berst
Campbell-Afternoon
Auxiliary of Knox
Presbyterian Church,
Woodstock ON



DATE: May 19–22, 2017

PLACE: Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Richmond Hill, Ontari

REGISTRATION FEES:
$375 before November 30, 2016
$475 after November 30, 2016
and before March 31, 2017

INQUIRIES:
womensgathering@presbyterian.ca
416-441-1111 or 800-619-7301

FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT womensgathering.ca

PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

September/October 2016

24 Women to Women: Encouraging Women of Faith
by Colleen Wood and Alexis McKeown

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **My Inspiration**
by Amy Zavitz

7 **Love Your Neighbour**
by.Amy Zavitz

10 **Reaching out to Seniors**
by Helen Macdonald

14 **Thanksgiving Worship**
by Colleen Wood

22 **Autumn Leaves**
by Maureen E. Kowel

34 **Welcoming the Stranger**
by Colleen Wood

38 **Mission In Action**

IN THE SOCIETY

42 **In the Society**

47 **Remembering**

47 **WMS ... Did You Know?**

Glad Tidings

September/October 2016
Volume 92, No. 5
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2016 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

...as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:19–21 (NRSV)

Our family is just home from a long weekend participating in Family Camp at Camp Kintail (Synod of Southwestern Ontario). At camp, it is so easy to be thankful. At camp, surrounded by God's creation, and so many caring Christians, words and songs of thanksgiving flow easily. As I reflect on that weekend and on my life back home, I thought I would share a few things that I am thankful for, to encourage you to be thankful.

I am thankful for fruitful ministries. Sometimes we get tired of hearing of churches struggling and closing. Sometimes we are frustrated that our mission work seems to be declining. But at camp, I saw a growing fruitful ministry. I heard of increasing numbers. I also heard stories of staff that are doing amazing things. I was surprised when I arrived to see, Amy "Orbit" Zavitz working in the kitchen. Amy has worked at Camp Kintail several summers and in this month's Glad Tidings, you will read about her experience working with The Presbyterian Church in Canada in Malawi. Another staff person the summer, James Clark, has just graduated from Knox College and will be ordained to congregational ministry this Fall. Camp inspires people to live their faith. Camp develops and equips young leaders and for this I give thanks.

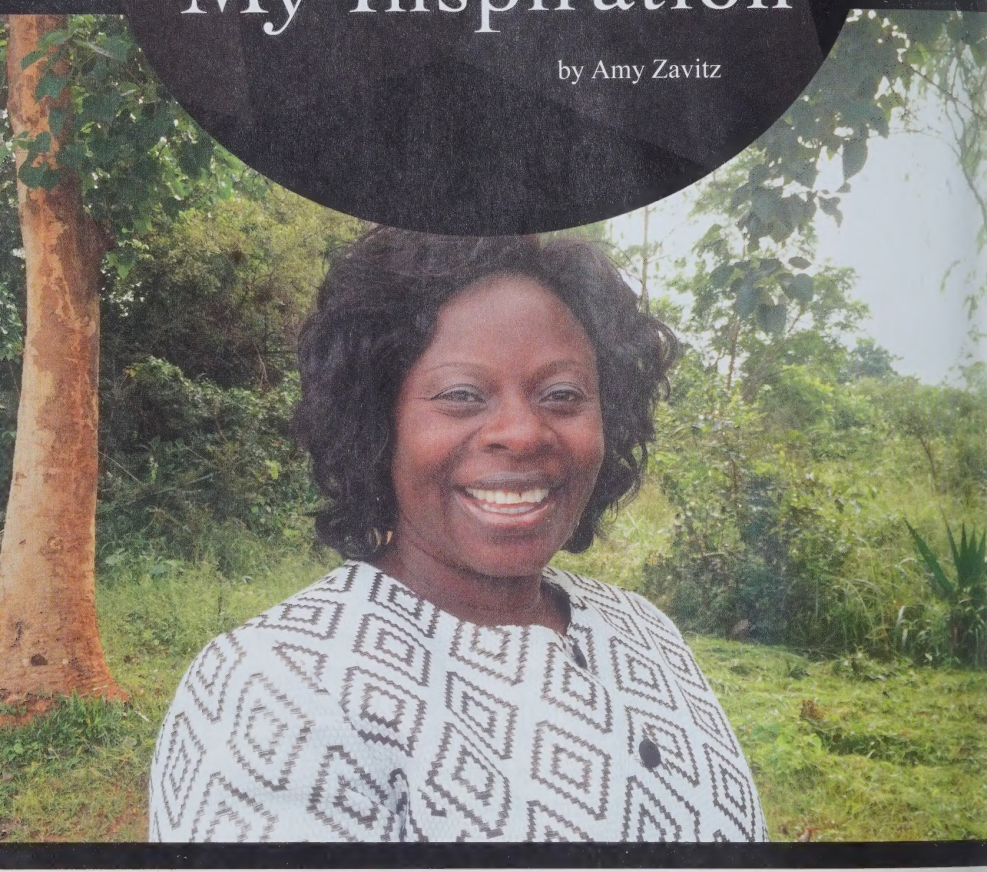
I am thankful for God beautiful creation. I love the woods, the water, the smooth rocks on the shore, and sunsets. I love the garden that provides fresh produce for our meals. It re-ignites my soul and allows me to return the city, renewed.

I am thankful for my family. To have time away from our daily routine is refreshing. To watch my 10-year-old climb at the high ropes course inspires me. To see my 6-year-old daughter help to lead worship and enthusiastically sing the songs at campfires brings me joy. To walk down to the beach with my husband, to watch the sunset while camp counsellors put my children to bed, is a true gift.

And now that we are home, I am thankful for many things—our home, camp memories, this country, my health, meaningful work, our church community, and for family and friends. Thanks be to God.

My Inspiration

by Amy Zavitz



We are often asked as children, "Who inspires you? Who is your role model?" As adults, these questions seem to disappear and we are left wishing for inspiration. Throughout my internship in Northern Malawi, I have met many strong and courageous women.

A special woman who has inspired me countless times is Mphatso Nguluwe. Mphatso is the Director of the Livingstonia Synod AIDS Programme (LISAP) in Northern Malawi. Her role as a director is led by her dream of a healthy and vibrant population without HIV. Mphatso implements programs throughout Northern Malawi that empower communities to build a sustainable future. Mphatso is incredibly dedicated to the future of others. Her hope is that this future will hold

economic and social empowerment, the ability to access proper nutrition, as well as education. She motivates and inspires everyone around her by passing along her passion for a better world. Mphatso's ability to succeed as a woman in a country normally led by men is one more reason she is a role model for many around her as well as myself.

As amazing as her work is, it isn't the only thing about her that I find inspiring. Like many children in Malawi, Mphatso spent her childhood spread between several relatives. She was sent to live with whichever relative could support her school fees; unfortunately, at times she faced a great deal of mistreatment and neglect. In these households, Mphatso was responsible for the childcare of her cousins, cleaning, and making and selling doughnuts in offices. She would frequently miss weeks of school at times in order to complete chores in the household.

Mphatso aspired to be a nurse, but due to her living situation she did not receive high enough grades in secondary school to attend university. She was, however, accepted into a college nursing program. Mphatso excelled in her post-secondary education and on several occasions was asked to complete further training. She was the Dean of Faculty and Deputy Principal at the Ekwendeni College of Health Sciences before becoming the Director of LISAP in 2008.

After Mphatso received her certificate in Nursing and Midwifery in 1991, she began paying school fees for her brother and sisters, since her mother did not have the means to do so. Mphatso did not want her siblings to face the same challenges that she did. When Mphatso graduated

from university in 2001, she began adopting children. She has a total of ten adopted children from nine different families. This was to give back to her community what her relatives, including her grandmother, had given to her. And Mphatso enjoys every bit of it.

Mphatso has expressed that her inspiration stems from her visits to the rural areas of Malawi. She saw the humanitarian challenges and discovered they resulted from poor socio-economic conditions. In response to this challenge, Mphatso felt compelled to give away pieces of clothing she was wearing. This eventually led to adopting children from families that found it hard to support their children's education. Independently, Mphatso is providing each of these children with a stable home and primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. Mphatso noted that her children are the oldest in their families and she encourages them to stay connected to their biological families with the hope that they will eventually support their younger siblings to succeed as well. Mphatso approaches her child-filled life with a peppery personality and engaging sense of humour. She often jokes that she has ten children from nine fathers (two of these children are biological siblings).

Malawi is often described as "the warm heart of Africa." Mphatso is a living example of this analogy. Her tireless work in the fight against HIV, support for the community's children, and dedication to creating educational opportunities for all provide countless communities with independence and fulfilling lives.

Love Your Neighbour

by Amy Zavitz

Love your neighbor is a phrase often heard in Sunday school teachings and sermons. But what is the true meaning of, "love your neighbor?" And, how do we prioritize it in our lives? I thought I had a good grasp of this commandment. However, on a mission placement in Malawi, I truly learned what this meant.

I recently spent nine months living and working in Northern Malawi at the Livingstonia Synod AIDS Programme (LISAP). LISAP implements initiatives that focus on community empowerment and sustainable outcomes. Each project is established with a church consortium that comprises both religious and community leaders of the area. My role at LISAP was to conduct monitoring visits and evaluate the projects for successes, challenges,

To truly **love** our neighbour is to put their needs before our own.

opportunities, lessons learnt, and recommendations. I would conduct focus groups in the community to assess the true impact of the project and determine if the project was meeting the desired outcomes.

In October 2015, I was conducting a monitoring visit with women, who were part of Self-Help Groups. These groups seek to socially and economically empower women living in extreme poverty. Together, these women save money each week and are able to take out loans to start small-scale businesses, such as selling bananas or tomatoes. When conducting interviews, I heard the women expressing the importance of this financial opportunity as it increased their food security and their ability to pay school fees for their children. The women highlighted the decreased domestic violence incidents in their home as well as a greater appreciation and respect from their husbands.

The women gave me a chicken in appreciation for coming to their village. To add context, a chicken costs the equivalent of $6.25, and these women were struggling to each save about 25 cents per week. Likely, it had been months since they would have eaten meat but they gave me a chicken. I felt a mix of emotions upon receiving this gift. I understood that this chicken was a sacrifice for this group and

was quick to humbly accept their hospitality. However, I couldn't help but feel a sense of guilt knowing that my gift would mean they would loose out on savings that can help them reach their goals or meet a basic need.

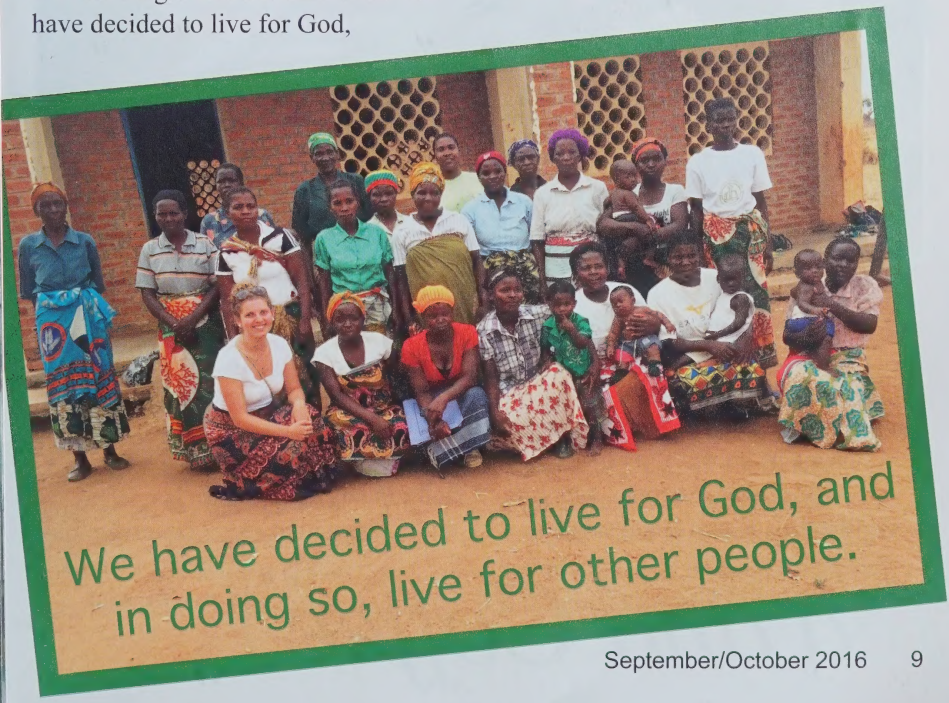
I feel that in North American culture, too often we are willing to give at a small inconvenience. We put a lot of focus on saving for a rainy day, but for so many people in the world, it's been raining their whole lives. We wouldn't give something to someone that we could not afford to have for ourselves—but that isn't what I experienced in rural Malawi.

To truly love our neighbour is to put their needs before our own. One of the commitments that we make when we decide to become a Christian is to no longer live for ourselves. We have decided to live for God, and in doing so, live for other people.

1 John 3:16-18 says, "*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*" (NIV)

It is not only our responsibility as global citizens to effect change, but an expectation of being a Christian.

The women that I met in Malawi showed me what it meant to love your neighbor. They have given me a goal of how I want to love my neighbours in Canada and abroad.



Reaching out to Seniors

by Helen Macdonald

Senior Centre
Fun-filled times at St. Andrew's

Thursdays are exciting, fun-filled times, at St. Andrew's Church in Orillia, Ontario. That's when our Senior Centre opens its doors.

Just over five years ago, the Rev. Karen Horst saw a need for seniors to get together for fellowship. She got a few senior members of the congregation together and shared her idea. That was "it" and within a few weeks we were up and running. The Centre is open to our congregation, other congregations in the area, and to anyone who

Tea and Coffee

Singing

wants to take part. Those who come are ages 50 to 90+ and they enjoy being together every Thursday from mid-September until mid-June. We also meet once in July and once in August—at the request of those who attend.

Our day starts off at around 10 a.m. with homemade muffins, tea, and coffee. As you arrive, a smiling face greets you and you get your name tag. If it is your first time, we get your contact information and you are introduced to the group during the announcements. We also collect the fee of $8, which is the total cost for the day. Then there is a singing group led by our Music Director, and line dancing led by a member of the congregation. This is followed by discussion groups on current affairs and Bible Study. The Bible Study is led by our Pastoral Care Minister, the Rev. Don Corbett, and the discussion groups by members of our group, our minister, or the Centre's director.

At noon, we gather for lunch prepared by caterers. One of our group shares her talents by making "something" for the table centres. It could be a floral arrangement or a decoration for a theme such as Valentine's Day or Father's Day. Each week, we wonder what artistic item will grace our tables. This is followed by a guest speaker or entertainment. Topics range from legal matters for seniors, health issues, etc. Entertainment may feature someone coming with a guitar to lead in a singsong or our choir or line dancers performing for us.

Then there is the chance to do woodwork, low impact exercises, play cards, or work on crafts (knitting, crocheting, etc.). The day concludes at 3 p.m.

We recently had a special Olympic-themed day organized by one of our couples. We were divided into teams, lit the Olympic torch, and then went from game to game, showing our skills. Do you realize the skill required to bounce a ping-pong ball into a pail? Our scores were handed in and then medals awarded to the three top teams.

Bible Study

Each month, we celebrate with those who have a birthday that month. During the year, we recognize other special days, such as St. Andrew's, St. Patrick's, Halloween, and Christmas when Santa finds this enthusiastic fun-loving group.

In 2014, we had a special four-week learning module on Indigenous people. We learned about their background, how to drum, and enjoyed some of their food. In 2015, our module was on art. This included a bus trip to the McMichael Gallery,

Entertainment

located just north of Toronto. We had the opportunity to try our skills at oil painting, making a papier-mâché bowl, or painting a landscape. A few of us had hidden skills, but we all had fun. In the Fall of 2016, our module theme will be literature and I have heard rumours that we may be writing and acting in a play.

The committee that handles the Centre began with St. Andrew's people only, but that has changed and we now have two members from the community sharing their expertise with us. All members are encouraged to pass on ideas for speakers, events, and programs.

Some attend every week and others only when they can make it. No matter how often you attend, you will always receive a warm welcome and go home smiling after enjoying quality time with other senior members of our community.

The Seniors' Centre has proven to be a wonderful gift. We have discovered its capacity to enhance the lives of seniors, many living on their own. For the church, St. Andrew's has discovered another community ministry that has helped us to reach out beyond our four walls. At every age, people are seeking meaning and purpose in their lives. Our Seniors' Centre has been able to offer a steady, caring environment—a safe place to be.

Helen Macdonald is a long-time member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Orillia. She was a CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training) leader and serves the church on many committees. She was also the first female clerk of session.

What will your gift grow?

Discover how you can turn your assets into a gift that will change lives and grow the mission of the church – for generations to come.

provisionaries

To make a bequest, acquire a gift annuity or give a gift of stock to a PCC ministry, contact:

Stewardship & Planned Giving
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Dr. Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
www.presbyterian.ca/provisionaries
1-800-619-7301

Thanksgiving Worship

by Colleen Wood

Opening (from 1 Chronicles 16:7–10)

One: O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,
All: make known his deeds among the peoples.
One: Sing to him, sing praises to him,
All: tell of all his wonderful works.
One: Glory in his holy name. Amen.

Hymn: #433, All creature of our God and King

Scripture:

Introduction: The Ark of the Covenant is finally safe in the tent that David has built for it. After this, David moves into this wonderful passage of thanksgiving.

Read: 1 Chronicles 16:7–36 (NRSV)

Then on that day David first appointed the singing of praises to the LORD by Asaph and his kindred.

O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
Sing to him, sing praises to him,
tell of all his wonderful works.
Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.
Seek the LORD and his strength,
seek his presence continually.
Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he uttered,
O offspring of his servant Israel,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.
He is the LORD our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.
Remember his covenant forever,
the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,
the covenant that he made with Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant,
saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance."
When they were few in number,
of little account, and strangers in the land,
wandering from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people,
he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their account,
saying, "Do not touch my anointed ones;
do my prophets no harm."
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Tell of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.
For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
Honor and majesty are before him;

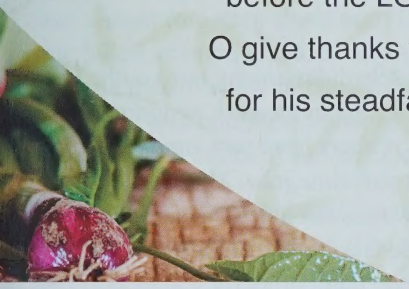
strength and joy are in his place.
Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come before him.
Worship the LORD in holy splendor;
tremble before him, all the earth.
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice,
and let them say among the nations, "The LORD is king!"
Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.
O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.
Say also:
"Save us, O God of our salvation,
and gather and rescue us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name,
and glory in your praise.
Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting."
Then all the people said "Amen!" and praised the LORD.

Reflection:

I love the outdoors. For me, the time of year doesn't matter. Whether it is canoeing on a quiet lake in the Summer, walking through the crunchy leaves in

"Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.
O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever."

1 Chronicles 33–34



the Fall, catching snowflakes on my tongue in Winter (I even like shovelling), or splashing in puddles in Spring, I can appreciate all the seasons. The changing seasons are one of the many things I am thankful for. I especially love it, when I get a few extra hours to enjoy them. But, that doesn't come as often as I would like.

Life is busy. I hear from many of you that it doesn't seem to matter what stage of life you are in, life is busy. For me, that time involves working part-time, church activity which includes me volunteering as a youth leader and my husband serving on the board; taking my two kids to their various sports and church activities; keeping up with my running, and harder still, trying to put healthy meals on the table while parenting two children. I know that this business doesn't change much when you get older. When my father first moved into a senior's apartment, you would think his schedule would be light, but we almost had to make an appointment to see him.

He had exercise classes, social engagements, trips, and worship. Even when he moved into a long-term care facility and his health was deteriorating, he seemed busy.

Volunteering as a youth leader, I even see busy schedules among our youth. The competition of school leaves them busy with tests and homework assignments. Many of them play sports or take music lessons. Others have part-time jobs. One young woman in our group works two different part-time jobs. There is always something to be done, and sometimes, we feel we are not able to accomplish the important tasks. Sometimes we need to finish the task before us, before we can take the time to accomplish other things, and to do them properly.

That's where I am at right now—right now I have one important task to accomplish, so I can get onto the next important task. Before I head out on our family vacation, I need to get the September-October edition of *Glad Tidings* to the print house. That means, first I need to finish any writing I am responsible for, then I need to edit it all, and pass it along to our great designer, Alexis McKeown. After doing a final edit and check, we send everything to the print house, and wait for them to return the proofs so I can sign off on them. While I am away on vacation, *Glad Tidings* will be printed and mailed out, but first I need to finish it.

I must admit, most months, I feel an overwhelming sense of thanksgiving when I finish up the *Glad Tidings*, and it heads to the printer. I love my work and part of this is the sense of completion when I sign off on the proofs. As it goes, I often give a prayer of thanksgiving, and ask God that each edition will encourage, challenge, inform, and even entertain you.

If I feel this swell of thanksgiving for a small job, imagine how David must have felt, finally bringing the Ark back to where it belonged. This was David's

second attempt as the first one had not ended well. The Ark had been lost having been used as almost a good luck charm in battle by the sons of Eli. The Ark was almost forgotten about until David, in battle, defeated the Philistines. After one failed attempt, David finally brought the Arc home. I am sure that this was just one task of many in David's busy life. Yet, he was so thankful to have this important task completed, that he wrote a Psalm. What a lovely way to give Thanksgiving back to God, to celebrate and be grateful.

For us, we too need to take time to be grateful. That is one of the things I usually accomplish on my vacation. The slightly slower pace, and more time outside, seems to help me swell with thanksgiving. For many, the month of October is their time to truly focus on giving thanks.

As I was thinking about this service, I started thinking about both the act of thanksgiving and the holiday of Thanksgiving. Like so many holidays it has Christian roots. Although not marking a Biblical event, Thanksgiving has often been celebrated to offer thanksgiving for the harvest. Today though, I wonder how much of our celebration is about us, and how much of our celebration is about God. It is not that filling up on wonderful food and spending time with family is bad. Actually, often Biblical celebrations were just that. But I wonder if sometimes we forget why we are doing it. I wonder if like Christmas, where we sometimes need the reminder to keep Christ in Christmas, if we might also need a reminder to keep God in our thanksgiving celebrations. How do we, like David, become so overwhelmed with thanksgiving that we just need to do something to share our thanks?

First, I think we truly need to remember all the things we are thankful for. So, beginning today, until the end of October, I encourage you to write down 2 to 4 things in your life that you are thankful for. As you consider these things, I trust that you will want to give thanks for them.

I think we truly need to remember all the things we are thankful for ... There are many ways to give thanks, and you will need to consider the one that works best for you. I encourage you to try a new way that you can thank God this month.

There are many ways to give thanks, and you will need to consider the one that works best for you. I encourage you to try a new way that you can thank God this month. For some, that might be writing your own Psalm, a poem to God. You might want to write a prayer or paint a picture. If you are musically-oriented, perhaps you will spend time each day singing to God. For others, you might walk around your home or neighbourhood thanking God for the things around you. Others give thanks by being generous to others.

Finally, take one meal this month and offer it as your feast of Thanksgiving. Among friends, or on your own, tell God what you are thankful for and thank him for his presence in your life and around your table. If you are able, invite someone to join your meal who might not have a place at another table or make a small donation to a local food bank or another charity that helps others.

It is right to give God our thanks and praise for the wonderful things he has done in us and among us. Take the time this month to celebrate God's amazing love in your life. Think about the things he has allowed you to accomplish and make time to celebrate.

Hymn: #338, Let all things now living:

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Before the Prayer of Thanksgiving, give each member of your group a slip of paper with the words, I thank God for:

During the prayer explain that you will say, "We now offer our prayers as a group." At that time we will go around the group, offering our own personal prayers of thanksgiving that we have written down. Give the group a few minutes to write their prayers down.

> Let us pray,
> God of David, we thank you for the inspiration of those who have gone before us. We thank you, that like you were present in David's life, you are present in our life.
>
> God, we know that we are often busy. We often have much to accomplish. We thank you that you are with us, and that you work through us to accomplish great things. Be with us in our busy times, and also during those quiet times. Even when we feel we are doing little, we know that you can do great things through us.

It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

David set
before us a
great example of
showing thanksgiving.
As we celebrate the holiday of
thanksgiving, we ask that you remind us to truly
focus on the many things you have provided for us.

We now offer our prayers as a group by reading our prayers to you ...

For all our spoken and unspoken prayers, we give thanks.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Offering:

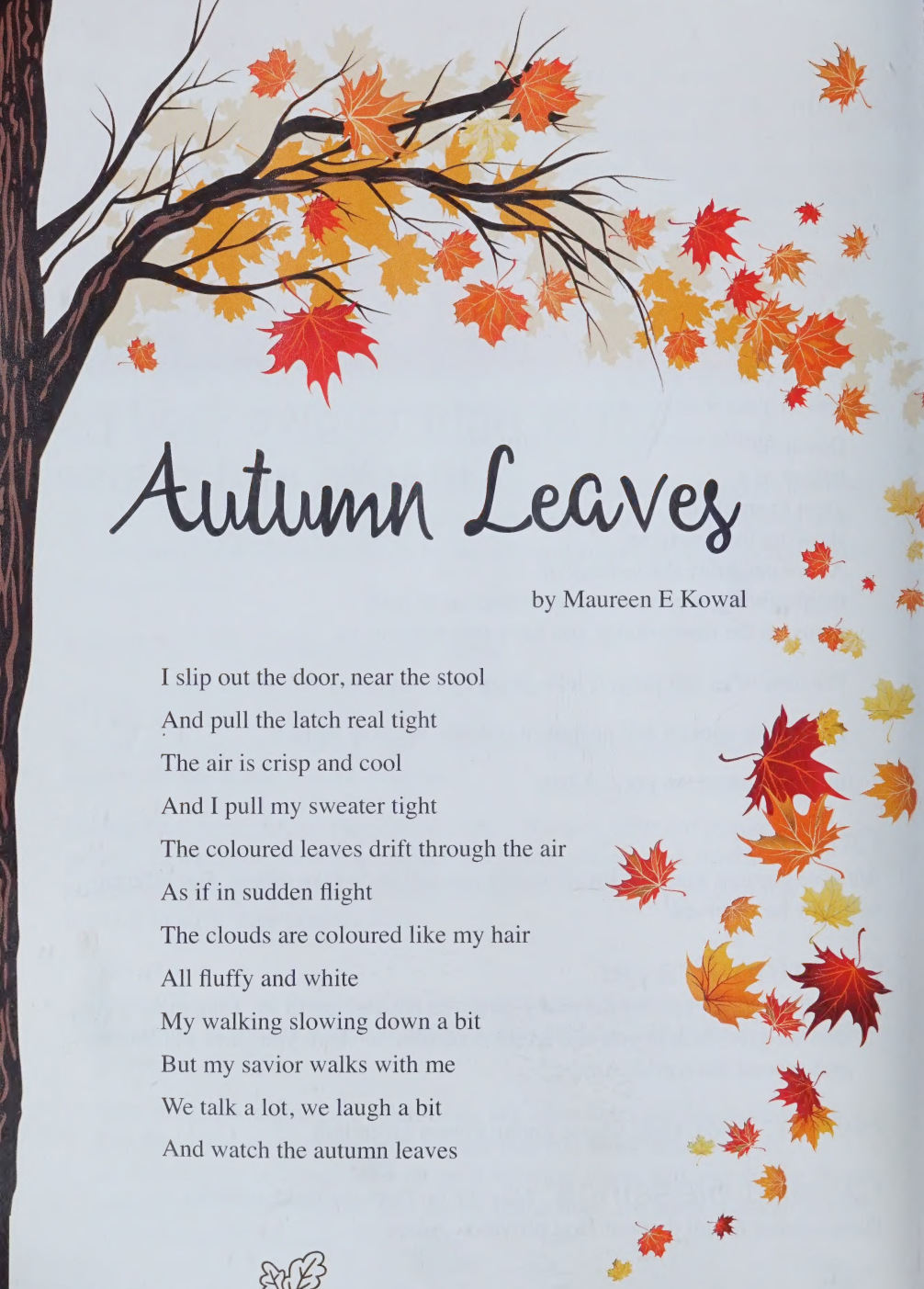
We give because you first loved us and you call us to love others. The offering will now be received.

Offering Prayer:

God, we thank you for the many gifts you have given to us. Take these gifts that we give back to you and let them be used to share your love in Canada and around the world. Amen.

Hymn: # 663, God, whose giving knows no ending

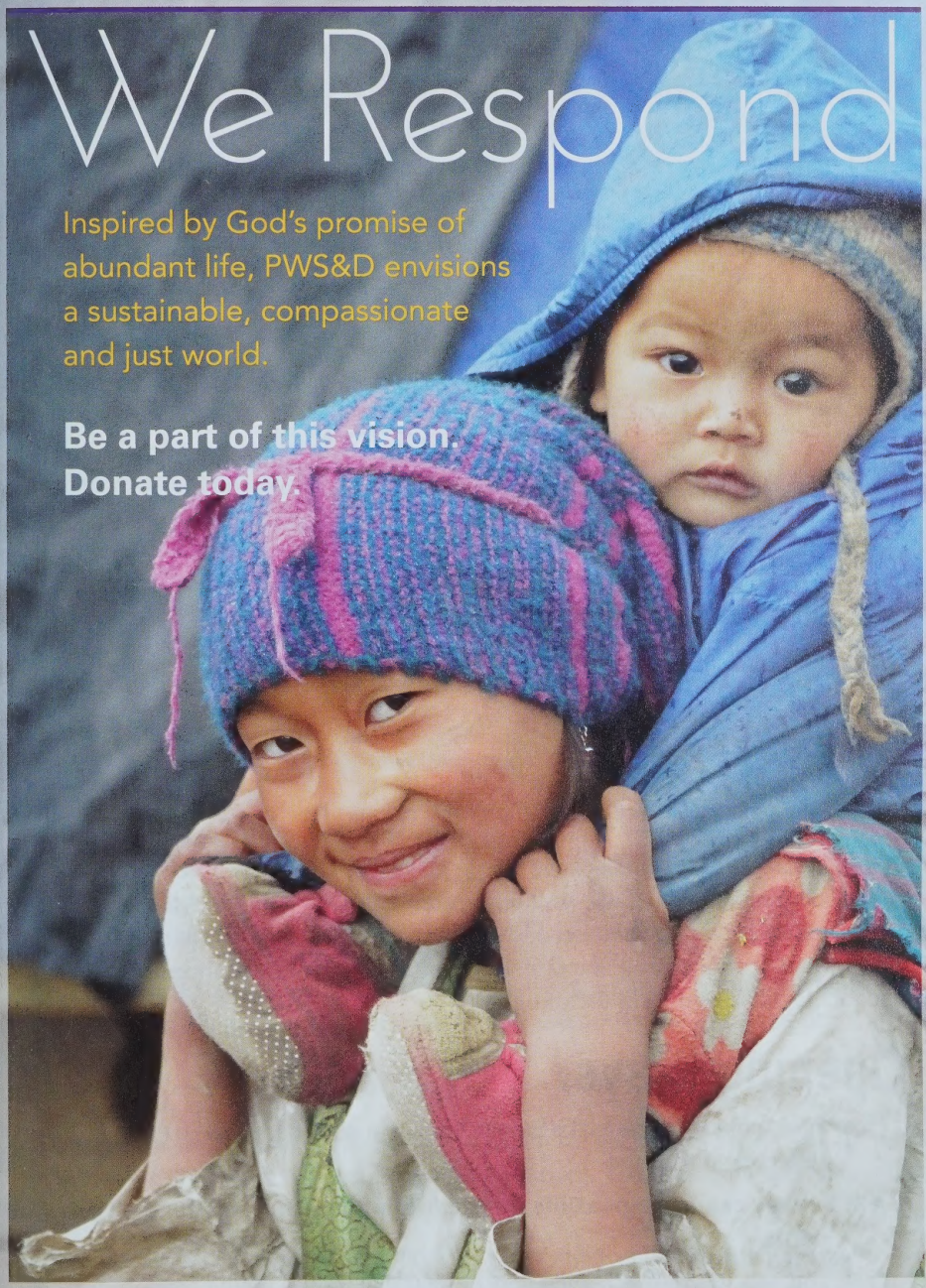
Closing blessings: May we go from the place offering thanksgiving for all that our God provides. Amen.



Autumn Leaves

by Maureen E Kowal

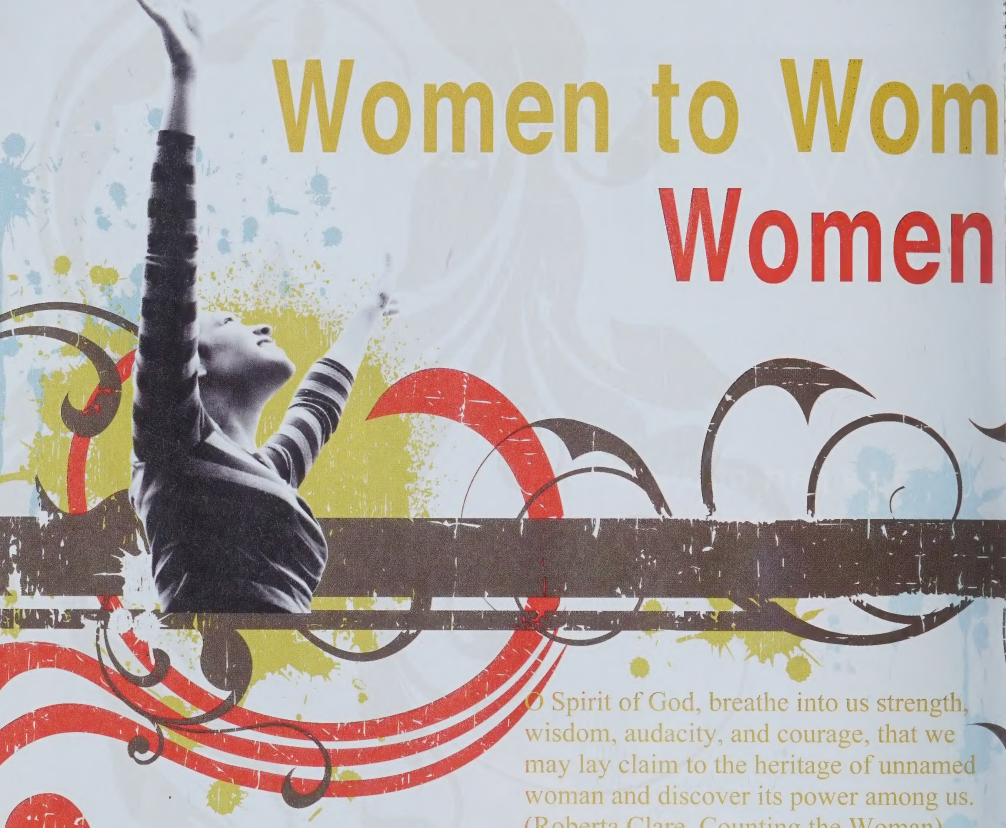
I slip out the door, near the stool
And pull the latch real tight
The air is crisp and cool
And I pull my sweater tight
The coloured leaves drift through the air
As if in sudden flight
The clouds are coloured like my hair
All fluffy and white
My walking slowing down a bit
But my savior walks with me
We talk a lot, we laugh a bit
And watch the autumn leaves


We Respond
Inspired by God's promise of abundant life, PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.
Be a part of this vision. Donate today.

50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291, **WeRespond.ca**

Presbyterian World Service & Development

Women to Wom
Women



O Spirit of God, breathe into us strength, wisdom, audacity, and courage, that we may lay claim to the heritage of unnamed woman and discover its power among us. (Roberta Clare, Counting the Woman)

The Women's Missionary Society is primarily made up of Presbyterian women across Canada. Our members have a long history of caring for others both within Canada and around the world. In addition to this, our women have a long history of caring for one another and encouraging each other in their faith. In this study, we will consider the importance of this and how we can increase this and encourage other women in their faith.

Opening Prayer

One: God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature.

All: So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle,

One: and, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."

All: God created human beings; he created them godlike,

n: Encouraging f Faith

by Colleen Wood and
Alexis McKeown

One: Reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female.

All: God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!

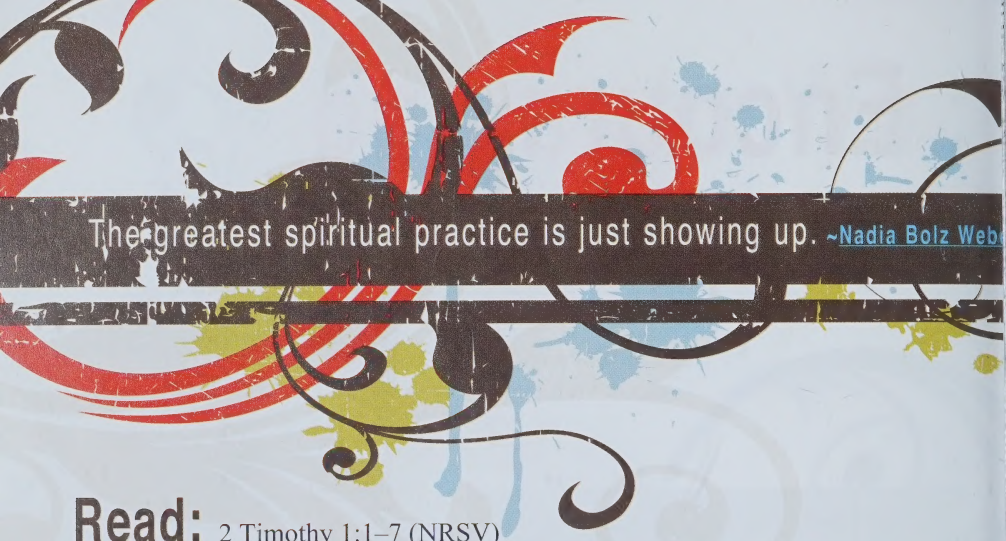
One: Be responsible for fish in the seas and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth." Genesis 1: 26–28, The Message

We have been formed male and female, equal, but different. Today, we will explore what it means to be a woman of faith and how we can support one another.

Let us pray:
Loving God, thank you for the names by which we are called. Thank you for a sense of purpose, which gives meaning to our lives. Thank you for the faith you have given to each one of us.

Open our hearts, so that we may work together today and participate in one another's faith journey. Help us to have open ears and willing hearts.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Read: 2 Timothy 1:1–7 (NRSV)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved child:
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Read: Timothy 3:14–17 (NRSV)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

Questions:

- Did you grow up in a family of faith?
- How do you think this has affected your life as a faithful woman?

- Have you had any opportunity to nurture the faith of younger family members (children, nieces, nephews, siblings, grandchildren, or Godchildren)?
- What are/were some of the challenges?
- What are/were some of the blessings?

Read: Titus 2:3–6 (MSG)

Your job is to speak out on the things that make for solid doctrine. Guide older men into lives of temperance, dignity, and wisdom, into healthy faith, love, and endurance. Guide older women into lives of reverence so they end up as neither gossips nor drunks, but models of goodness. By looking at them, the younger women will know how to love their husbands and children, be virtuous and pure, keep a good house, be good wives. We don't want anyone looking down on God's Message because of their behavior. Also, guide the young men to live disciplined lives.

Questions:

- How do you react to this passage?
- If you are an older woman, do you feel that you should live as an example to younger women?
- Do you think this passage is still relevant today?

Titus 2 might or might not seem relevant to you today, but taken with other verses in the Bible it gives a breadth of opportunity for women to act as mentors and leaders. We also read of women who prophesied (Acts 21), taught (Acts 18), gave financially (Luke 8), and served in many other ways. However, Titus does seem to point to a kind of mentoring relationship, where older women

Following Jesus is a group activity. Something we are supposed to do together.

~Rachel Held Evans

are called to live faithfully, to nurture the faith of younger women. I am sure many of us can name those whose lives of faith have been an example to us.

Gratitude Beads: Celebrating our Six

Preparation: Have a basket of beads for the group to choose from. You need a minimum of 6 beads for each person, but it is great if you have more and a nice variety to choose from. You will also need beading string or wire for each person, enough to make a bracelet (12 inches maximum for each person). (If your group has dexterity challenges, larger bead and pipe cleaners would be easier to use.)

Think about your own faith. Whether you have grown up in the church, or come to faith later in life, it often involves the people in your life. They actually say that everyone needs six people to help them keep, strengthen, and grow in their faith. These connections often come from our family or our church family.

We will create a bracelet to remind us of these people. As you consider who your six people might be, choose a bead to represent each person, who has helped to mold your faith. As you put them onto your string, we will talk about them:

- Who are some of the people, who have nurtured your faith?
- How did they share their faith to you?
- Are there specific areas of your life that they nurtured?
- What are some words you would use to describe these people?

After each woman has completed her bracelet, pray: "We are grateful for those women and men who have nurtured our faith. May we remember them often, and think of ways that we can nurture the faith of others in our midst. Amen."

Women to Women:

When considering nurturing the faith of women, there is value in women nurturing other women. I believe that women and men are equal, but different, and I celebrate some of these differences. Many of us also have men who have influenced our faith, and we are thankful for those men too. But, for a moment let us reflect on a few of the reasons that women might be better, or at least different, in the ways we nurture the faith of other women:

Why women to women?

Women speak a woman's language. All women don't communicate the same way, but there are some consistencies that help us speak and listen to women in ways many men don't understand. Sometimes we don't want someone to fix a situation. We want to talk…and talk…and talk. We notice cues and details. We want someone to pat our back and pass the tissue. We want time.

Women are usually more open to discussing spiritual things and share woman stuff with women. We might not share something intimate every time we are together, but we're much more likely to talk about miscarriages, rape, abuse, pregnancy, sex, menopause, and mammograms in a group of women. I have often been impressed with what our WMS women are willing to tackle in their groups—challenging and disturbing topics. Also, women are generally more willing to be vulnerable and open to new relationships.

Women need to be called by name. It's nice to be recognized, not just as someone's wife or mother or sister or daughter. Even though we might love those identities, God made us unique. It's important that we—and others—acknowledge and celebrate that uniqueness by discovering who we are as well as our passions, talents, and gifts. We can do this within our women's groups.

(Taken from Susan Lawrence with Darrel Rowland Why Women's Ministry? *http://christianstandard.com/2011/05/why-women%E2%80%99s-ministry/)*

Mentoring and Women's Groups:

Preparation: Have a basket with smooth river rocks—one for each participant and a permanent marker ready. Also have a pen and recipe card for each person.

Think about your WMS group. What makes it special? How does it nurture your faith? How can you share this group with others?

Does your church have another women's group?

Should it? If so, how could the WMS help support the formation of another group?

Now, think about yourself. Hand out a recipe card and pen to everyone in the group. Invite each member to take a few minutes to write down a few things that make them special. Be certain that they know that this is for them personally and will not be shared with the group. Take a few minutes in silence for this activity.

When most have finished, say: God made you special. He gave you a love for him, and I trust, a love for others. That is all it takes to share your faith journey with others in an encouraging way. I (Colleen) have never been part of a formal mentoring relationship, but I sure have been the recipient of the care and nurture of many Christian women. First, my Mom, who was a faithful woman who shared care towards her family and others. She served her church and her WMS group faithfully, and loved to chat!

Another woman of faith who nurtured my faith was the church administrator at St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. Jean Currie was a faithful woman. She is a smart, hard-working (volunteering countless hours for countless tasks), and has a strong sense of social justice. Later, I was privileged to work with the Rev. Lynda Reid with the Synod of Central Northeastern Ontario and Ontario. Again, she showed me her love, care, diligence, intelligence, willingness, and creativity.

None of these women likely know that I consider them as past mentors, but all of them took time for me, nurtured my faith and other areas of my life, and provided care and many a listening ear.

Take a moment to think of the younger women in your life, or even a peer who might be struggling. Think of family members, friends, youth group members, or even women within your WMS group. As you think of these people, is there someone specific who God might be pointing out to you. Think of just one person from those you have considered that you might be able to pray for, encourage, or nurture.

In silence, think about how you might be able to connect with that person? How can you share your faith with them? How can you provide a listening ear and perhaps even a word or two of advice? A marker will be passed around and I encourage you to write their name or initial on the rock. As you do, think of ways you can be a source of strength for them and perhaps become a mentor to that person.

Closing:

As we close today, I encourage each of you to think of those who have mentored you and how you can leave this place, encouraged to share your faith with the women around you.

During our closing prayer, I encourage you to look at your bracelet, and hold your rock. Thank God for those who have mentored you and pray for opportunities to mentor others.

Leader: Lord our God, we give thanks today for women. From the earliest times until today and on into the future, women show all of us how to live as God's beloved children in God's beloved creation, carrying out your commission to work for justice and peace for all God's creatures. We remember all of those women, who have nurtured us that we named today. Because of them, our faith has been strengthened.

Leader: For Eve, mother of us all, disobedient yet beloved, we say:
All: Thank you, Lord!

Leader: For Miriam, who danced beside the Red Sea, we say:
All: Thank you, Lord!

Leader: For Mary, mother of Jesus, who pondered the angel's words in her heart, we say:
All: Thank you, Lord!

Leader: For Mary Magdalene, first to hear the voice of the Risen Christ, we say:
All: Thank you, Lord!

Leader: For the persistent widow, who would not rest until she won justice, we say:
All: Thank you, Lord!

Leader: For Mary and Martha of Bethany, who served the Lord together in their different ways, we say:
All: Thank you, Lord!

Leader: Today Lord, we have considered the gifts you have given to each of us. We have also thought of women in our life who might, even now, be looking for a kind word, a listening ear, a bit or challenge, a hug, or a suggestion.
All: Help us to reach out to others. Give us the opportunity to nurture the faith of others.

Leader: For the witness of all bold and caring women, yesterday, today, and tomorrow, Lord our God, we give you thanks and praise.

All: Thank you, Lord! Amen!

(Adapted from a prayer by women of the ELCA for Bold Women's Day)

Additional Activities:

1. Presbyterian Woman of Faith Award

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Order of Diaconal Ministries, and the Women's Missionary Society have established an award to recognize the work of women within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The Presbyterian Woman of Faith Awards will be given to women who are part of The Presbyterian Church in Canada who should be honoured either for faithful service, a specific accomplishment, or a lifetime of achievement.

The recipients of this award will be recognized at a banquet at the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering on Sunday May 21, 2017.

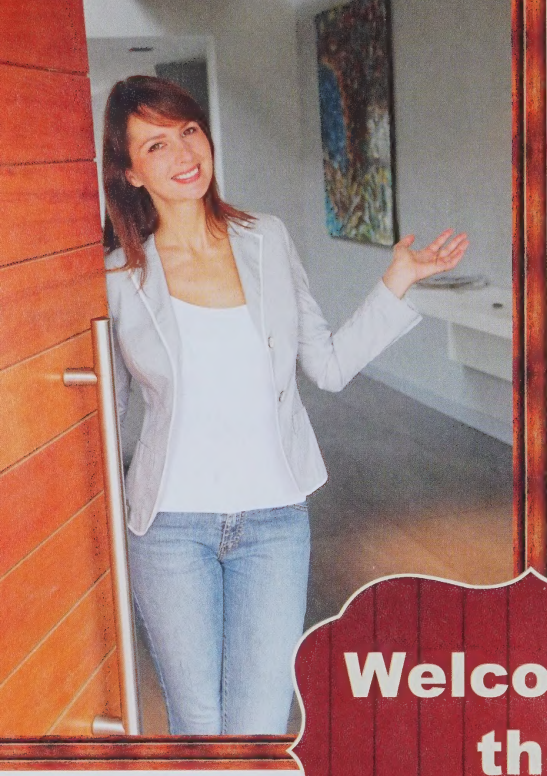
As a group, consider nominating a Woman of Faith. All nominations must be received by November 30, 2016 and the nomination form can be found at: http://presbyterian.ca/woman-of-faith-awards/

2. The Hub Website

As a group, visit The Hub, the website of The Women's Missionary Society created to help women connect. Alternatively, print out one or two of the articles that are posted on this site. Pray for this site, and promote it to the women in your church (flyers are available from the WMS office). Visit the hub at: http://womenshub.ca/

3. Consider the quote

"Be careful of challenging another woman's choices, for you never know when she may be sitting at the feet of God." (Rachel Held Evans) Do you agree with this quote? If you were to embrace this quote, how might it change how you relate to other women? As a mentor to another, do you have a special responsibility in challenging the choices of others or is there a better way to mentor others?



Welcoming the Stranger

by Colleen Wood

Hospitality. Somehow this word seems a lot different than when I was a kid, most days. Today is different and I love it.

Today, my house is a buzz of noise and excitement. Popsicles are being consumed. Kids are playing. New kids are dropping by. Currently, there are seven children, two of which are mine, bringing noise and excitement to my day. This is the childhood that I remember. Some days we would be inside playing. Other days, we would be at a friend's house. There would be days on bikes and days at the park. My house, and all of my friend's home, were open to us. We were welcomed.

Today, we seem to live in a world of organized playdates. We clean because a child's friend is coming over and often a parent stays. I bake muffins or

cookies. I buy craft kits, or organize an activity or two. Today is different. Yes, I anticipated some of these children coming over, but we are just back from a weekend canoe camping. I knew the house would be a mess. And, along with the children that were expected, a neighbour brought over a visiting niece. They are all happily playing.

Aside from making them lunch, I am not entertaining or programming anything. I have let the older boys play way too many hours on the PS4, but sometimes we watched too much television as kids too (and both families are just home from active vacations and you would be amazed at how 'active' the boys are playing soccer on a gaming system.)

We had another different experience of hospitality recently, too. Again, welcoming others into our homes seems like it takes money and planning these days. We need to have a pulled together house and menu. If you watch home shows, or read magazines, they seem to suggest that even a backyard barbecue seems to require matching furniture, a themed table, and a well-designed banquet of food and complementary drinks.

Yet here I was with a challenge before me. For the second year in a row, our church was encouraging members to host neighbourhood parties. I had already thought about doing this a number of time, but finding the time to host a party was a challenge. This year, I decided I would do it. I wouldn't worry about the perfect date, time, menu, or house. I made a simple invitation and planned a simple party. I planned for cold drinks and snacks on a Sunday afternoon in June. Sure, I would still try and have a welcoming yard, free of thistles, and have a few things out for the kids (bubbles, sidewalk chalk, and some new sand in sandbox), but I wouldn't go crazy. My house wouldn't need to be perfect—the invitation to come would have to be enough.

I invited families from the 14 houses closest to us. Many came and it was great getting to know the neighbours better—some who we didn't even really know to see them.

These two experiences got me thinking about hospitality, especially hospitality as a Christian. We often think about the spiritual gift of hospitality and I think we all know those people who can make anyone feel welcome, anywhere. But, when we look to Romans, we read: Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. (Romans 12:13, NRSV) We are all to welcome. Generally this passage is considered to focus on other Christians, but it can go beyond this too. Think about all those we can welcome. This means welcoming, and maybe even working together, with other denominations. This means praying for, and supporting, Christians around the world, many

that face persecution. I think this means even trying to listen to and welcome Christians with an opposing view as you. But, as I said, I think this also goes beyond other Christians.

Our neighbourhood party consisted of many different religious groups. I had some Halal chicken nuggets for our Muslim guests and made certain there were some vegetarian appetizers for our Hindu guests. Everyone got along. It was a relaxed afternoon of conversation. Before that day, these neighbours were relative strangers. Now, we stop and chat, or wave as we pass along the street.

I have always thought I have been reasonable at offering hospitality, but it is easier when the recipients are friends and family. With strangers, it takes practice. It takes me out of my comfort zone. I was nervous about having the neighbours in. First, I had to invite them, which required me to walk up to their doors and chat with them. Would they think I was selling something? Would they think I had another motive? Everyone I met was pleasant and every door opened!

Then, I had to open my own door, this time the backyard gate, to invite others in. In the end it was a wonderful afternoon. Though I did learn a few things. I learned that next time I need to prepare a lot less food because almost everyone brought something to share. I also learned to check my calendar. Our party was held during Ramadan, so our Muslim neighbours were fasting during daylight hours. They did attend, and even brought cookies, but couldn't stay long because it was a hot afternoon and they were tired from the heat and the fasting.

But the one thing I wouldn't change is the fact that I held a party for strangers. Everyone who attended seemed to appreciate the opportunity to connect. John1:14a says, "The Word become flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood (The Message)." What better way to show it than by God's people hosting neighbourhood parties! With a little preparation and prayer, you too can welcome the stranger and provide hospitality. It's easier than you think!

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.

John 1: 14a, The Message

Canadian Society of Presbyterian History's

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

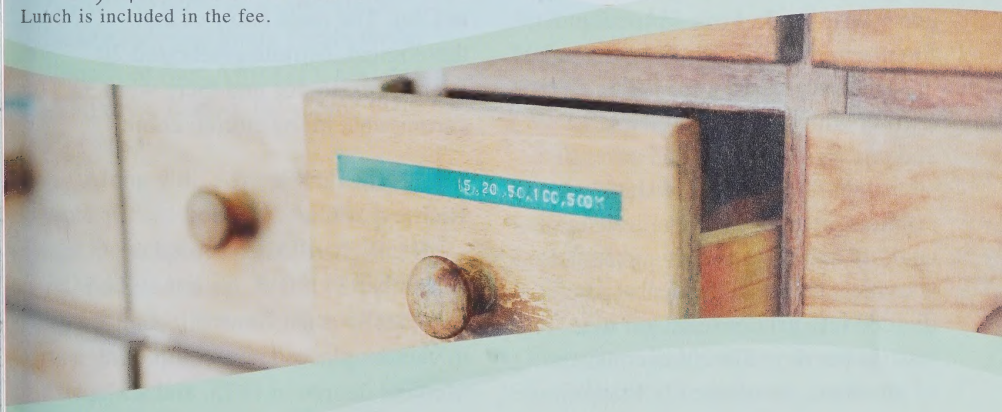
on Saturday September 24, 2016

Knox College, main campus, University of Toronto

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

$45; $40 students

Lunch is included in the fee.



This year's topics:

"Restless Spirit, The Odyssey of Norman McLeod (1780–1866)" Leader of a group of Scots Presbyterians who immigrated to Cape Breton, then to New Zealand

"What Were They Thinking?" 50th Anniversary of the Decision by General Assembly to Ordain Women

"Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916–2000) The Missionary Who Wasn't" Designated from Knox Presbyterian Church, Spadina, Toronto, he later become a world-famed interpreter of Islam.

Questions and further information, contact: Ian Mason, Secretary: secretary@csph.ca; 519-864-1119

Website: www.csph.ca LIVE-STREAMING WILL BE AVAILABLE

Mission In Action

David and Anna Pándy-Szekeres
Ukraine
Summer English Language Camps

The Reformed Church Secondary School in Nagybereg held this year's English Language summer camp from June 13 to 18, just at the completion of their academic year. This language camp, which is traditionally held every year, is always a spirited and fun program.

This year, there were ten teachers (two of which were from the USA and one from Canada) and several assistants. Two former students—now teachers—taught grammar, music, and organized the games and sports activities. Over 120 students were divided into groups to attend five lessons per day. Their day consisted of grammar, vocabulary, Christian music, and world culture. David and I focused on teaching Bible stories, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, the Ten Commandments, and prayers in English.

Brian Johnston

A special concert was organized on May 20th at the Lutheran Church in Cluj. The male choir of the theological institute celebrated 20 years of existence and there were 33 participants in the alumni choir.

TRANSITIONS:
Richard Allen

Dr. Richard Allen retired on December 31, 2015. He has served The Presbyterian Church in Canada in various places since completing a Medical degree in 1975, and a Master

of Public Health in 1984. His overseas service started in 1974 as a medical student in India, and then went on to Nigeria and Nepal, where he was appointed to the United Mission to Nepal. In 1984, he went to Pakistan to work in a Rural Health Care Project.

He was Acting Executive Director of PWS&D from September 1989 to August 1990. In 1994, Dr. Allen was appointed by the Life and Mission Agency to serve as Community Health Advisor to the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) based in Kikuyu, Kenya. He served there for 20 years.

Along with African colleagues, his work focused on HIV/AIDS control and the development of a progressive HIV/AIDS policy. We give thanks for his ministry over many decades and wish him God's blessing in his retirement.

Brian Johnston

Brian retired on May 31, 2016. In 1997, Brian Johnston was appointed by the Life and Mission Agency as an English teacher, and Music and Choir Leader at the Protestant Theological Seminary of The Reformed Church in Transylvania, Romania. The seminary is situated in the ancient city of Cluj, or Kolosvár in Hungarian, and is the only institution that offers theological degrees leading to ordination. Students must learn Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and English, which is where Brian's talents as a teacher were greatly appreciated.

The city of Kolosvár icludes a vibrant arts and music scene. Music is important in Hungarian culture and faith, so it was not long before Brian formed a men's choir that performed on tour in Canada in 2001. The Gifts of Music Fund has provided opportunities for seminary students

The Reformed Church Secondary School's English Language summer camp.

and congregational members to learn to sing or play an instrument, and enhance their performance abilities. One might say that the 2001 Canadian choir tour was a "high note" in Brian's ministry.

A former student noted that "these concerts brought people from other denominations to our seminary, people who otherwise would have never made contact with a protestant institution, breaking down the walls and the barriers of the fear of the unknown, of an alien world for them. These concerts had a much greater impact on the lives of people, and on the special relation between ethnicities, religions, and cultures in the city, than one would have thought."

As so often happens in ministry, Brian did not see the impact he was making because he was open to all people and delighted in their talents, especially when it came to music. Brian welcomed outsiders into a closed and homogenous community, and allowed them to be accepted there. Does this not sound like a gospel story, Jesus welcoming the outsider, the stranger, offering hospitality?

Denise Van Wisson

Denise van Wissen has completed her service with The Presbyterian

Church in Canada. Like so many young Presbyterians, Denise first served as a volunteer in 1993, following a mission trip to Nicaragua. In 1998, she accepted a regular mission appointment with SOYNICA, the Soya Association of Nicaragua, working as a nutritionist and technical advisor. Since then, Denise has continued to work in the area of nutrition serving in both Nicaragua and Guatemala.

In December 2016, Denise completed her assignment with The Presbyterian Church in Canada and she will now be working with World Renew.

Synodical

Annual meetings can be boring, but the **Central, North Eastern Ontario and Bermuda** Annual Meeting was an exciting celebration as 85 women, and a few men, met at Elmvale church to enjoy their outstanding hospitality. Of course, the first burst of Spring weather also helped to set the mood for a great time.

Barrie Presbyterial hosted the meeting. The Rev. Sarah Kim enthusiastically brought the group up to date on the 2017 Women's Gathering, and Alexis McKeown explained how The Hub functions to improve communication among women. Tori Smit presented book reviews.

The Rev. Karen Horst, moderator of the 141st General Assembly, was our main speaker and Bible study leader. The study dealt with Exodus after the euphoria had worn off, and the Israelis people had to deal with the new reality of their lives. After lunch, Karen showed a PowerPoint on her mission trip to Romania, with an urgent side visit to a refugee camp, as the entry points to European destinations were being closed. She compared the Roma people to our Aboriginal peoples, saying both are marginalized by society.

There was an extensive book table and fair trade marketplace. The fair trade market was open to the community, so others could also make purchases.

We met some great musicians during our gathering. Sing-songs and music for the event were led by Ruth Currie. On Friday evening, 10-year-old Jackson Bray and his 6-year-old sister, Gracie, played violin, ukuleles, and the grand piano. The whole group were tapping their toes, and almost dancing in the pews.

If all meetings were this enthusiastic and upbeat, while still being thought-provoking, Christ's mission here would be better served.

With a feeling that Spring was finally on the way, the members of the **Quebec and Eastern Ontario** Synodical made their way to St Mathew's Church in Ingleside for their Annual Meeting on Saturday April 9.

After a lovely welcome, and what amounted to almost a second breakfast by the ladies of the church, we were led in thoughtful worship by the Presbyterial of Lanark and Renfrew.

Then, the President, Irene Nesbitt, constituted the meeting with prayer and the excellent reports of the past year were read and accepted. Ruth Pollock then treated us to an interesting presentation on her recent trip to Guatemala. With

input from two other women who had also travelled there and some excellent photographs she had taken, we heard of the work that PWS&D (Presbyterian World Service and Development) is doing in that country to offset the difficulties that face the people there, especially the women. This being one of our Together We Can projects, the offering taken was designated for this project.

Before breaking for lunch, Brockville Presbyterial led us in a meaningful short In Memoriam service as we remembered and honoured those members, who had died during the last year.

Gathering again after lunch, Joyce Bender, accompanied by Betty Zavier at the piano, sang for us before we moved to start the workshops on Creative Prayer. Divided into two groups—Praying in Colour led by Vivian Young and Praying in Poetry with Ruth Davidson—we explored: what is prayer, why do we pray, and how prayer is being open to the presence of God. Well planned and informative, these workshops showed that prayer is a living, developing, growing relationship with God.

Joan Hilliard led the installation of the officers for the coming year and the meeting closed with prayer. Altogether it was a stimulating day.

Presbyterial

London Presbyterial held its annual one-day retreat on May 5 at the Backus-Page 1850s museum near Walkerton, ON. The Good Samaritan was the theme for the day, and Valerie Shaw, president, welcomed everyone. After the opening prayer, the Rev. Robert Shaw led the group in singing some favourite hymns.

Our guest speaker Jackie Hoekstra, who works at the Cross-cultural Learning Centre in London, spoke about the Syrian family that was sponsored by the Presbytery of London. She gave examples of how so many people have come together to help the family adjust.

After a brown bag lunch, we toured the museum or enjoyed a nature walk to observe the Spring flowers.

After another Sing Song, Worship was led by the Belmonte WMS.

~Elaine Brown

Maitland Presbyterial held their May meeting at Lucknow Presbyterian Church with the theme, Spring into Action.

Joanne Lennips brought greetings on behalf of Lucknow WMS and welcomed the ladies to a delicious assortment of desserts prepared by the Lucknow women. Lorraine Clugston led a hymn sing and then President Mary Simmons conducted the business.

The guest speaker was Erin Gilchrist, who recently returned from a four-month term in Kenya where she was a global advocate for the non-profit

organization, called Mamma Hope. She spent her time at Kisumu, the third largest city in Kenya. Mamma Hope rescues orphans and places them in a safe home as well as providing a safe place for mothers, who are temporarily unable to care for their children. They raise goats and chickens and grow farm crops, such as kale and eggplant for good nutrition. They help women with HIV and provide medication for HIV-pregnant women so they can give birth to children, who do not have HIV. They also promote good health for the women and children and teach women skills so they can provide an income for their families. While Gilchrist was there, they opened a shop that teaches women to sew school uniforms and other garments. It was named in honour of her grandmother and was called the Margaret Mowbray Taylor Shop.

After the speaker, Mary Simmons led a Worship time. Kathy Howald presented an honourary WMS membership to Nancy MacIntyre of South Kinloss. Ellen Waldock closed the evening in prayer.

Courtesies "RAP"
By Lottie Sutherland
Kingston Presbyterial Annual General Meeting 2016

The church in Stirling was the Scene
They welcomed us warmly, with smiles and grins
And gave us coffee, tea, and muffins
The meeting was about to begin.

The devotions were led by the Stirling group
In Ecclesiasties we're given the scoop
How GOD has planned the world in time,
If we do HIS will, everything's fine.

The business part was done with Grace
And made us glad we came to this place
We heard about Synodical too
And of their new guidelines review.

Olive Brinson in her delightful manner
Told of her trip to Guatemala
How they plant seeds of hope—not corn
In between meals of squash and corn.
As we learn about Maya mam
Let's give to our project, "TOGETHER WE CAN."

Barb Best led us to the book table
Reminded us to buy what we are able
Then we went down all in a bunch
To enjoy soup and sandwiches for lunch.

We thanked Lois Bennett playing Hymns of Praise
As to our GOD our voices raised
Then we were invited to sit
And hear words of wisdom from Tori Smit.

She told us life is not full of fantasies
Led us in a study of Ecclesiastes
And so our minds and thoughts wouldn't wander
Gave us some serious questions to ponder.

Now we cannot go, it is a cinch
Without thanking Linda McNinch
She led us well, it was a ball
Gave us her strength, she won us all.

But do not fret, worry, fuss or frown
We have a new president, Susan Down
And just to show we really do care
We will support her in prayer.

In our thanks, we're almost done
We include each and everyone
And as our way, we homeward trod
Go Home and Go Safely with your GOD.

WMS on the Road

Susan McLennan, National WMS President, attended the Commissioning Service for Camp Kintail staff. Her husband, the Rev. Mark McLennan, as Moderator of The Synod of Southwestern Ontario, led the commissioning service. Susan spoke briefly on behalf of the WMS. Pictured with Susan and Mark, are directors, the Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee and Johnathon Lee.

Mission at Canada Youth

Canada Youth 2016 met from July 5 to 10. As part of their mission, almost $2000 worth of calling cards were collected by participants and their congregations. These will go to Action Refugies in Montreal for refugees in detention centres, who need to phone home for identity documents.

Learn more about Canada Youth in the next edition of *Glad Tidings* where we will have articles and pictures.

Circulation News

It's that time again—renewal time. Group renewal packages should be in the mail in early September, followed shortly after by renewal packages for individuals.

Please take the time to check your address closely and the address of your group members. Also, make your members aware that they can change their magazine to a large print edition for no extra cost. The large print edition has a full-colour cover, and black and white interior. There is a sample page of our large print edition in your package.

Also, you can support the ministry of the WMS and of *Glad Tidings* by promoting the magazine to others. Let others know, that *Glad Tidings* is not just for WMS members. Consider giving a gift subscription to your church library, minister, or your Clerk of Session. It's a great way to inspire them and help them learn more about the mission of the WMS, women's ministry, and the work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Joan Patricia Hodgson
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian Women,
Scarborough

Isobel Yeats
St. Andrew's WMS,
Kitchener, ON

Dorothy Davidson
Edith Harrison
Shirley Cossitt
Bessie McMurchy WMS,
Knox, Listowel ON

WMS ... Did You Know?

Your WMS staff are here to serve you!

Sarah Kim, Executive Director
Alexis McKeown, Program and Communications Coordinator, part-time
Colleen Wood, Editor of *Glad Tidings*, part-time

To contact the staff, you can call the office at 416-441-1111 or toll free at 800-619-7301. Please note that the office is closed on Monday.

Email is also a great way to contact the staff:
Sarah Kim at skim@presbyterian.ca
Alexis McKeown at amckeown@presbyterian.ca
Colleen Wood at gladtidings@presbyterian.ca

Alexis McKeown, Colleen Wood, and Sarah Kim

Glad Tidings

Subscribe to *Glad Tidings*

To order contact:
Glad Tidings, **50 Wynford Drive**
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
800-619-7301 or 416-441-1111
gladtidings@presbyterian.ca

Subscription rate for 2017 is $15.00 plus applicable taxes

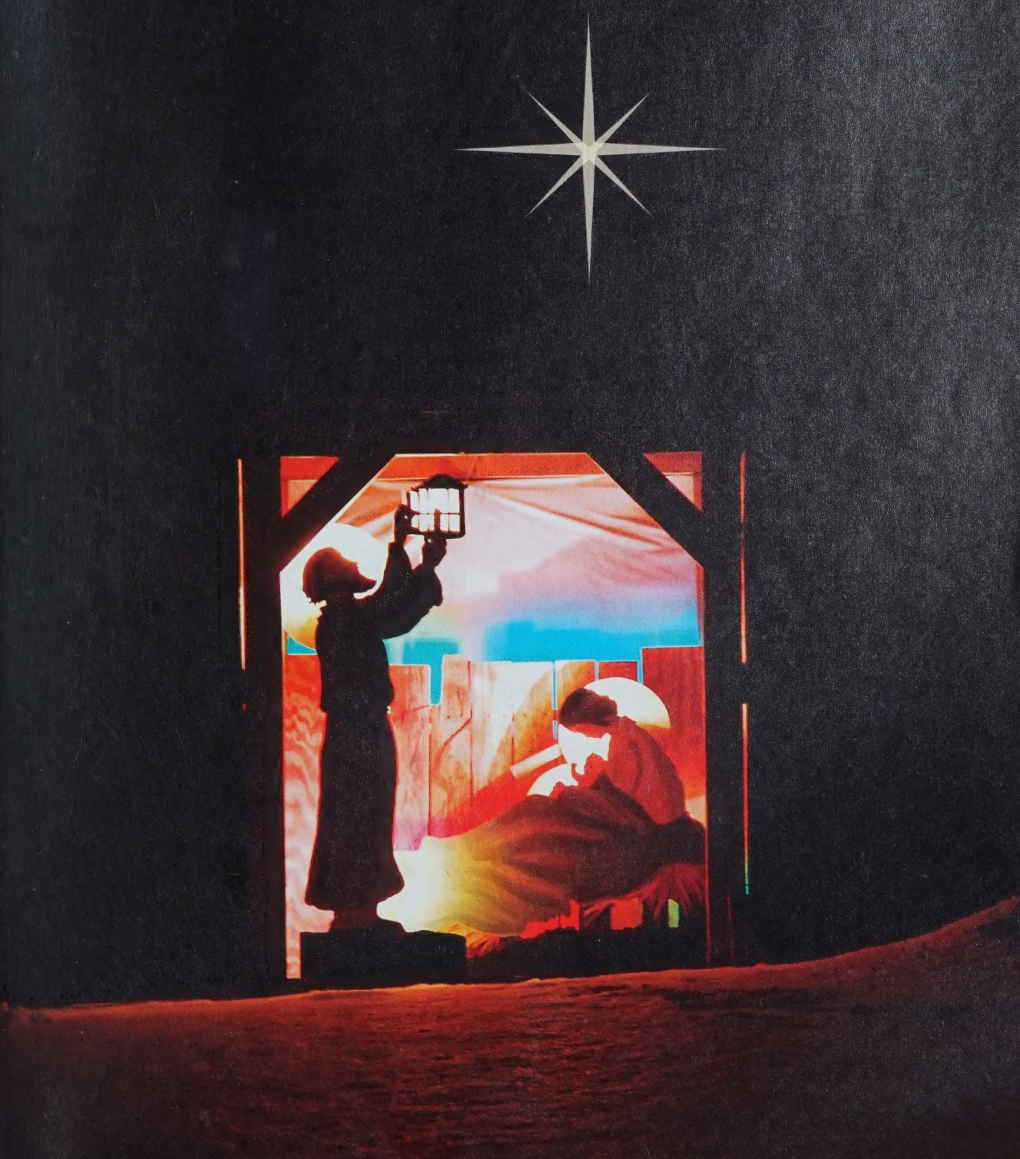
($16.95 in NB, NL, ON; $17.10 in PEI; $17.25 in NS; and $15.75 in BC, AB, SK, MB, QC)

PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

November/December 2016



24 Christmas Worship: Angels—Sent by God—with Good News
by Shirley Murdock

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **We Are Home: CY 2016**
by Shelby Cole
by Zoe Say
by Lauren Cole
by Nathan Leach and Aran MacDonald

16 **Serving and Learning Together**
by Beverley Shepansky

22 **Sisters in Spirit Vigil**
by Carragh Erhardt

23 **PWS&D Responds to Hurricane Matthew**
by Karen Bokma

28 **He is Coming**
by Kathy Hoogsteen

30 **"Tea at Lucia's"**
by Will Ingram

34 **Study–Women: Guatemala**
by Karen Bokma

42 **Mission In Action**

45 **Waiting...in Anticipation for the 2017 National Women's Gathering!**
by Gwen Ament

IN THE SOCIETY

46 **In the Society**

47 **Remembering**

Glad Tidings

November/December 2016
Volume 92, No. 6
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2016 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

Editorial

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. *Luke 2:16 (NRSV)*

There it is—the word haste, or hurried if you prefer the New International translation. Wow, I know those words. This Fall, it seems to be my life. "Grab your hockey stick; we are going to be late." "Let's hustle. I don't want you to be late for school." It's even there on Sunday mornings, "Let's go, I hate being late for church." There is the rush to get out the door in the morning and the rush to get out to evening activities. There is a deadline for homework and even one for *Glad Tidings*. So we hurry. We make haste.

And, I know it is coming. Christmas is coming. Another time that seems hurried for most of us. Make haste. Get to the mall to buy the perfect present for the in-laws. Off to church to practice for the choir concert. Don't forget to pick up new clothes for the kids in time for the school Christmas pageant. Make travel arrangements to celebrate with family. Oh, and yes, the husband's work party can't be forgotten.

When we reflect on the first Christmas we often think of a peaceful scene, yet I am sure there was a sense of urgency then too. Joseph must have felt it when he was trying to find a place for his labouring wife to give birth. The shepherds felt it as they went to find the Christ child. An entire nation was likely feeling it as they were waiting for the arrival of a Messiah to improve their situation.

Yet, amidst this, the shepherds found time to go and meet this Messiah. I wonder what it was like in the stable, gazing upon the Christ child. Did they immediately stop? Where they able to leave the rush behind and enjoy the calm? Did they speak in hushed voices so as to not wake the Christ child? Was this a moment of peace in the usual rush of life?

Can there be peace in your Christmas? Can you stop long enough to encounter the baby in a manger? The shepherds left their flocks behind, and went with haste. What will you leave behind as you make Christ a bigger priority this Christmas?

I haven't answered these questions yet. It is still October so there are still many weeks before Advent begins. But I will. I will think about Advent and Christmas and contemplate again, what I need to do to stop, and to once again enjoy the peace that Christ brings. May you also find peace this Christmas.

JOINED TOGETHER AS GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

WE ARE HOME

EPHESIANS 2:20-22

CY2016

Canada Youth (CY) is a national gathering of youth, young adults, and their leaders from across The Presbyterian Church in Canada, with guests from around the world. Since 2000, CY has been a place for Presbyterian youth to worship, play, create, learn, dance, act, make new friends, study scripture, share joy, laugh, discover, play crazy games, reflect, pray, sing, and share. This past summer, Canada Youth 2016 was held at Brock University.

The event is split into three tracks, each with a separate focus and objective. Each day, time is spent in your own track, and also as part of the whole community, where participants join for worship, recreation, and meals. The three tracks are:

- Youth Track: Where high school youth spend time learning about God, faith, and the world in small groups, workshops, and recreation activities.
- Discipleship Track: Where young adults are engaged in conversation about vocation, discipleship, and spiritual practices.
- Youth Ministry Training Track. Here, leaders have the opportunity to share ideas, learn from youth ministry experts, explore resources, and connect with colleagues.

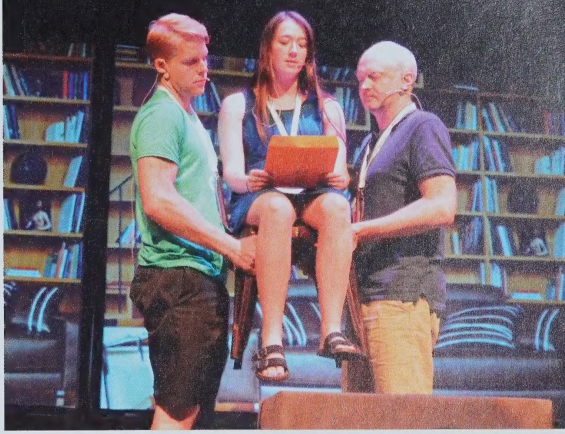
Canada Youth is planned by a group of youth and adults under the very capable direction of CY Coordinator, Jo Morris. It is a ministry of the Life and Mission Agency.

Life Changing: Attending Canada Youth Discipleship Track

by Shelby Cole

I wanted to attend Canada Youth (CY) again because it changed my life. The first time I attended Canada Youth was in the Youth Track. It was so memorable that I couldn't pass up the opportunity to participate in the Discipleship Track this time. The worship, fellowship, and the opportunity of being surrounded by others wanting to explore their faith, really helped me connect and rediscover my faith. CY has always felt like a safe place where you can be yourself and not have to worry about being judged. The young adults and youth participants are able to mingle and help each other along on their own faith journeys. It was such a wonderful experience getting to connect with people of all ages and all walks of life.

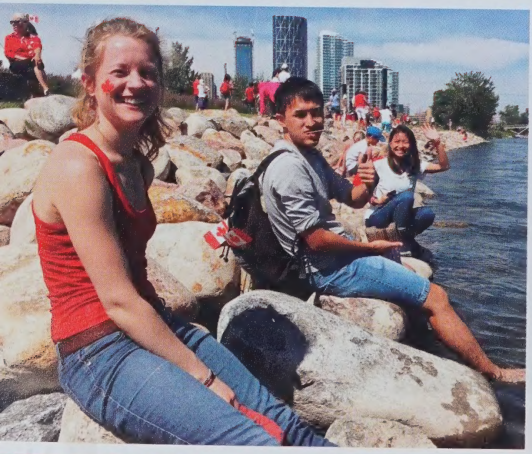
One event that really impacted my life was when we talked about confession in worship. We were asked to take a postcard and write down something that was weighing on our hearts. It was a very moving experience for me to write down what was troubling me. We were then invited to take our postcards and "mail them" to God. The next evening before the ministers began their sermon, they announced to



everyone that we had received mail. Participants from the service came down and began handing out postcards to everyone. The postcard read, "I received your postcard. I know all about it. No matter what—you are—and will always be, my beloved. Love God." When I read my postcard, it really hit me hard. The joy and comfort I felt was indescribable. I truly felt God's presence and his unconditional love for me during that evening.

Even after CY ended, I still have a hard time reading over that postcard without getting emotional. That event really impacted how I live out my faith feel more connected with God and I f more secure in myself.

One message I would say to those who have never experienced CY is th Canada Youth is a life-changing even It will be something you will be so gl you did. I felt uneasy and unsure the f time I went, but I realized that everyo



In Jesus Christ We Are One Family

by Zoe Say

These days, it doesn't take much for me to start humming the catchy tune of, 'In Jesus Christ We Are One Family'. I didn't know the song until this past summer when it became a central theme amongst my myriad of experiences with the international body of Christ. Never have I understood so clearly the "family of the church" concept until I helped to host a group of International Guests from our partner churches. These guests were in Canada to participate in Canada Youth 2016 in July. Then, a couple of weeks later, I had the pleasure of visiting many of these guests in Budapest, before going on to a reformed Christian youth festival in Romania.

My first memory of hearing, 'In Jesus Christ We Are One Family', was when

lse there was in the same boat as me. made friends fast and that uneasiness ıelted away. It does not matter how old ou are or where you are in your faith ɔurney, it is an incredible experience. 'ou will meet so many amazing people ho will help you understand your faith nd encourage you to discover yourself. 'Y has changed my life for the better nd I would invite anyone to come share ıis experience with me and meet all the mazing people there.

ɔur Taiwanese international guests sang it in front of my home congregation of Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary. The international guests spent a week in the synod of Calgary Macleod before ıeading to Canada Youth, or CY as it is commonly called. It's a beautiful and catchy song and we were all soon singing ılong. I didn't know at the time that this ɔong would soon become very special to ıll the international guests and me.

Before that happened, our guests (eight from Hungary and six from Taiwan) got a grand tour of some of Alberta's most spectacular landscapes ınd diverse cultures, thanks to the Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw's great planning. They saw the famed turquoise lakes set ıgainst the big snow-capped mountains ɔf Banff National Park, got up close to ɔome buffalo, canoed across a lake, and ɔpent time learning about micro-farming ınd the local Blackfoot culture. I was able to go on several of their adventures, but their last night in Calgary was extra special for me. My job in Calgary is working for the Presbyterian and United Campus Ministry as Peer Facilitator at the University of Calgary and Mount Royal University. As the Campus Ministry was having our monthly Contemplative Worship while the international guests were in Calgary, we invited them to come and participate. It was wonderful to see our guests meet many of the students I work with and share communion with one another.

The international guests and I left for Canada Youth in St. Catherine's Ontario, early (on a 7 a.m. flight!) the next morning. My role at Canada Youth was to host the international guests while they were at the conference. I felt very blessed to have such a fun role as I had only been to CY once before, exactly 10 years ago, when I was a teenager in the

youth track. It's so interesting how life can be when God is at work.

One of my clearest memories from when I attended CY in 2006 was hearing Jo Morris, who was a complete stranger to me then, speak at a workshop I had accidentally ended up in on non-traditional ministry. I was unimpressed with the idea of ministry at the time and thought the workshop was about something else. Little did I know at the time that Jo Morris's story and this workshop would end up vastly re-defining and expanding my idea of what ministry means—namely, that it could be anywhere and at any time, and is not limited to a congregation. I have a feeling that shift in how I saw how faith could be lived out, contributed substantially to my ending up in my current job (in non-traditional ministry). Fast forward ten years and Jo Morris and I are sitting on a youth committee together at my church. I work full-time in campus ministry. And, I get invited by Jo to host 14 international guests at Canada Youth!

Once the international guests and I landed in Ontario, we stopped at the spectacular Niagara Falls, and then headed with excitement to Brock University to get set for CY. The conference was wonderful, the internationals were a fantastic group and enthusiastically got involved in every part of CY. The Taiwanese

taught the Hungarians the song 'In Jesus Christ' and they performed it for the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams, Associate Secretary of International Ministries, when she came to visit them. They quickly started receiving many invitations to be part of worship in various ways and to perform in the talent show. Of course, for the talent show the Taiwanese and Hungarians guests performed 'In Jesus Christ' together, along with showcasing a few of their own songs and dances.

One of my favourite parts of the conference was the nightly debrief with the international guests. It was so inspiring to hear all the ways they had encountered God each day. On the night of the talent show, our debrief started with how close they all felt to each other and how they really felt as though they had become family. When we shifted into the struggles of the day, it became apparent that the Taiwanese were very frightened about the super Typhoon Nepartak, which was just starting to hit Taiwan. At that point, the news was shifting from it being a regular typhoon, to it possibly being the worst typhoon ever to hit Taiwan. Most of the Taiwanese had lost contact with their families as the power was down. One expressed that she just wanted to go home to be with her loved ones.

They were waiting (without contact for the most part) for the crux to hit at 5 a.m. the next morning. This sounded very serious to me and I realized we needed to do something to support our Taiwanese friends tangibly in that moment. So we abandoned the rest of our debrief and I asked the Taiwanese group if we could pray for them. We invited them into the middle of the room and the rest of us surrounded them, laid our hands on them and prayed hard. I started (with God's help) one of the most intense prayers I think I have ever prayed, and asked others to follow if they would like. I think just about every person in that room prayed, Taiwanese included, many in their own languages. Even the most shy and quiet of the Hungarians and Taiwanese participants prayed out loud. Afterward, we were all in tears and were just kind of looking at each other in silence, feeling God's presence among us, when one of the Hungarians started to sing the song, 'In Jesus Christ'.

We all joined in immediately and sang our hearts out. Never had that song meant so much to all of us as we suddenly were the closest thing to family the Taiwanese had in that moment. And we were family, in Jesus Christ. After that we had a giant group hug (with the Taiwanese in the middle), and we were all able to go to bed. Thankfully, we found out the next day that everyone's family was okay, and just had a little damage to the outside of their homes.

Our last night together, we were in Toronto, and we all hung out in

one of the Hungarian's hotel room after our debrief. After some cards and dancing and chatting, it was time to say good night. As the Taiwanese group were leaving first thing in the morning, we had to say goodbye then. It was a sad time and hard to do after becoming such a close group. One of the Taiwanese group asked if we could pray together (CY was truly a life-changing experience for him. He had not been feeling very connected before he came, but by half way through the conference he had an encounter with God that changed him, and he felt renewed in his faith). One of the Hungarians suggested a type of prayer where we all put our hands in the centre and hold onto each other's thumbs, and pray at the same time in our own language. Then, he asked me to do a closing prayer. After that we had a group hug, and one of the Taiwanese started singing, 'In Jesus Christ'. Of course' we all joined in, the perfect ending to the evening. It was a bittersweet but beautiful moment. It was phenomenal to me to see God at work so tangibly amongst this group and to really feel that our faith bridged all language and cultural differences to bring us together as family.

I was able to visit four of the Hungarians in Budapest on my way to Romania two weeks later, and we were family again as they hosted me in their home, fed me, and showed me their beautiful city. The first face I gratefully saw upon arriving in Romania, rather haggard after some

At Home in the Faith Community

by Lauren Cole

I had the pleasure of attending Canada Youth (CY) for my second time this past summer. What made me decide to come back had nothing to do with my youth group coming, or the chance to "relive" my first experience. I wanted to go back because I had the opportunity to spend a week away from home worshipping and experiencing God's love and work through other Presbyterian youth and adults. I would also have the chance to see

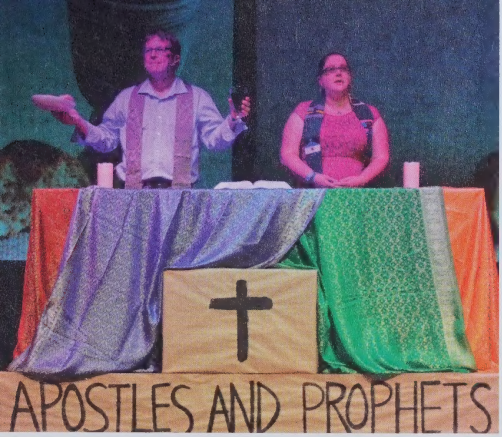
cancelled and delayed flights and losing my bag, was Szilard's, one of the Hungarian-Romanians who had come to Canada and who was also running the festival I had travelled to Romania for. Amidst all his last-minute preparations for the festival which was starting the next week, he somehow managed to find the time to call and harass the lost baggage people and was the reason (I'm convinced) that I finally got my bag back a week later.

These things, and many more incredibly inspiring experiences with Christians in Romania, showed me just how precious our relationships are with our international church family. We really are one family, in Jesus Christ.

friends I made two years ago and to see some of the friends I made when I attended General Assembly as a YAR in 2015.

My second experience was very different from the last one in 2014. At CY 2014, I stuck to the side of my sister and friends from my congregation the entire time. I found it difficult to let go of all the things that were distracting me and I had trouble opening up in our small groups. I didn't make as many friends. This time, however, I threw myself completely into any activity or experience I was participating in. I had the opportunity to be on the scripture drama team for worship, so I spent most of my time with the other scripture drama people. We became very close and I valued our time together.

This had a strong impact on my faith because I felt a calling to ministry. I haven't met any other Presbyterian youth who felt a calling as well, but a few of the other youth/young adults from that group are going into ministry. I was able to connect with them and have very deep,



personal conversations on what it is like and how we are experiencing God.

My small group was also amazing. I knew that at anytime I went there, I would be met with love and kindness from my small group leaders and the youth in the room. We shared so much together in the short amount of time we were there. After experiencing such an amazing week, it filled me with so much hope for our denomination. It was incredibly difficult to say goodbye to everyone on the last day.

CY plays a very important part in my growing faith. I connected and reconnected with so many Presbyterians from across Canada. I feel as though I brought home a broader sense of home. After participating in the Refugee simulation, I feel as though regardless of what we have, we are blessed to be in a safe country and to believe and have a faith in whatever we choose. We are also so privileged to have the freedom to worship. In some countries, if there existed such a thing as CY, the participants would not be allowed to go. What I took home was the blessing of our faith community.

My one message for anyone who has not been and is thinking of going, is that you need to go! You will never experience being with such an amazing group of people. Everyone there is so loving and kind and has had such a big impact on my life. I wish everyone could go because it was the best week of my life!

Serving Canada Youth

by Nathan Leach and Aran MacDonald (with interview questions from Jo Morris)

Serving on the Planning Team for Canada Youth is a long-term commitment as the event planning begins almost two years prior to the event. Here, two of the youth planning team members share a little of their experience.

1. You agreed to serve as youth reps on the Planning Team for CY 2016. Why was it important to you to serve and give of your time and talent for more than a year to create that event?

Aran: It was an honour to be asked to serve on this committee. As a previous participant in the event, I knew first hand the life-changing effects of attending Canada Youth. I was given an amazing opportunity to help change the lives of CY 2016 participants.

Nathan: The opportunity to serve in the CY 2016 Planning Team was an amazing chance to participate in a community that generously gave me, as well as many other youth, a truly unforgettable experience. My first encounter with Canada Youth was so memorable. I was given the beautiful embrace of hospitality by people who serve and love Christ. So it was a natural decision that when I was given the opportunity to participate in sharing my gifts of hospitality, I gave a clear YES to serve, with excitement.

2. How did your time on the Planning Team impact your senior year of high school?

Aran: My time of the Planning Team and grad year went very well together. The past year has been filled with many difficult decisions about the future and as I have said on many occasions, our team meetings always seemed to happen at the right time. It was amazing being surrounded by such wise, kind, and faithful people. They are a huge part of where I am today, whether they know it or not.

Nathan: The senior year of high school can be challenging for many. It is filled with fast-paced learning, and there is a search for that social equilibrium where your responsibilities are covered and your friends still know your name. Amidst this chaos, the Planning Team served to ground me. It actually brought calm to my social and academic work. When academic work weighted heavily on me, I could go to the Planning Team for encouragement and reassurance.

I knew my work on CY was inspired by God, for youth who want to know Christ better. This was a refreshing thought as we worked through some of the long, but crucial work for the event.

3. What did you learn from your experience as a CY Planning Team member?

Aran: I learned there is more work and jobs to be done for CY than I ever could have imagined as a carefree participant in 2014. I also learned how incredible it feels to see people participating in and being moved by what you have created.

Nathan: Working with the team, you are exposed to so many beautiful minds that can imagine, create, and share together. Within the team, there was an exquisite capacity for understanding. The most successful piece of learning I received is that there are many different ways to view a solution or idea. All of these points of view need to be considered when making decisions that have an impact on a large group. Working with the team made me conscious of those, who see the picture differently.

4. Why is CY important to The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Aran: Canada Youth is shaping and building the future of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Future ministers, moderators, choir directors, youth leaders, and congregation members are finding themselves and growing in their faith. A strong foundation promises a long-lasting structure.

Nathan: Canada Youth is important to The Presbyterian Church in Canada as a symbol of its commitment to youth in our denomination today. It shows us the success in teaching that youth are not the church of tomorrow, but these youth are the church of today.

5. What was a highlight of the event for you?

Aran: As a member of the worship team, worship each evening was a highlight for me. Hearing over 400 participants passionately singing songs we had helped to select and speaking words we had so carefully written was an emotional experience for me personally.

Nathan: The highlight of Canada Youth 2016 for me was working with the small group leadership, who became the hands and feet for the work of Christ and the imagination of the Planning Team. These very capable people made Canada Youth possible as they executed our dreams effectively. The conference leadership was a delight to work with and it made our church, that stretches right across this massive country, not only feel close, but made it feel like home.

6. The Planning Team took on a unique challenge and implemented a Refugee simulation experience for all

CY participants. What was your leadership role and did that experience have an impact on you? How?

Aran: During the refugee simulation, I lead two modules. My role was acting as a border guard. Our instructions involved us acting quite harsh and cold. I know our words and actions impacted the participants but they also impacted us. It was extremely challenging to behave in that manner. I would say the simulation was an eye-opening experience for both the participants and leaders.

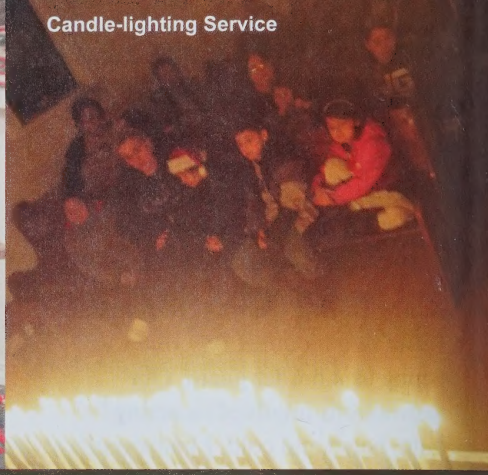
7. What words of inspiration or challenge do you have for the CY 2018 Planning Team?

Aran: To the next planning team I would say, never forget the final goal and all the lives your work will impact. It is an incredible journey on which you will learn more than you realize at the time. Be creative and take risks. That is how we grow. I look forward to seeing what is created for 2018! All the best!

Nathan: My advice to anyone on the Planning Team of Canada Youth 2018 is to remember the audience and listen closely to the people around you. I was fortunate enough to be surrounded by so many people from The Presbyterian Church in Canada, who are tremendous people and incredibly helpful.

I am a person who tends to want to do things on my own, thinking that I can do them best. This was certainly not the case. Know that the people around you are there for a reason and trust that they will help you do the job and contribute to the success of the event as a whole. Also, remember to stay relevant and move with the audience. Finally, know that this work is the work of Christ in our church and our world.

View more photos at http://presbyterian.ca/2016/07/20/photos-canada-youth-2016/. Most of the photos were taken by The Presbyterian Record.



Candle-lighting Service

Serving and Learning Together

by Beverley Shepansky

Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church (MMPC) is supported by Presbyterians Sharing. It is an over one-hundred-year-old Cree congregation in central Saskatchewan. For almost six years I had the privilege of ministering among these wonderful people. This article tells stories of how God has been present alongside the traditional ways of this First Nation.

Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church has a unique history. Chief Mistawasis used to hunt buffalo with the Rev. John McKay, who did missionary work around Prince Albert. Because of their close relationship, the Chief asked the Rev. McKay to build a church on the reserve. Of course, being Presbyterian, he built a Presbyterian church and became their first minister.

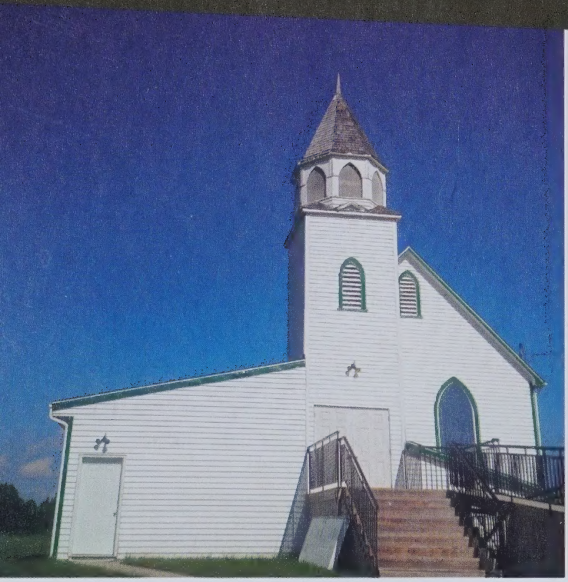
When the original building burnt down leaving only the iron bell, a second church was built and later

moved to the present location over the hall. The iron bell was placed on a cement cairn in front of the building. This beautiful white church, with the new bell tower, stands as a sentinel on a small hill overlooking the main road of the reservation. Every window in the sanctuary is stained glass—dedicated by former family members. Nine of the ten chiefs in Mistawasis were Presbyterian and are buried in the cemetery adjacent to the church. A very strong Presbyterian connection exists in Mistawasis. I was privileged to be a part of this history, and felt God's Spirit with me through my experiences with the people of Mistawasis.

Just like many of your congregations, our Sunday worship services included preaching God's word, prayer, and praise. I would receive prayer requests made by the congregation and we would sing together the 'good old favorite hymns'. During worship, I would especially enjoy using my native hand drum, while the children played other rhythms during the hymn singing. It was a joy to see the children dance as they made "a joyful noise unto the Lord." (Psalm 100:1a) This practice led one young boy to say, "Church is fun!" Consequently, when I left Mistawasis, I was happy to donate the hand drum and rhythm instruments to the church. I fondly remember that when I told the children I was leaving the instruments for them to play in church, they said all at once, "Thank you!" I felt blessed by these young children who are being brought up in the faith!

While most Sunday services were faithfully attended by five to six families, Sundays celebrating Baptism or Communion saw an increase in our numbers. Also, 80-100 adults and children would fill the small sanctuary for our Christmas Eve and Candle-lighting Service. Adults and children read or acted parts of the Christmas story while the congregation sang Christmas carols. Also, each person lit a taper candle from the Christ Candle in our Advent Wreath and placed their candle in the long board drilled with holes as Christmas carols were quietly sung. These candles provided the only light in the sanctuary as prayers were offered for past and present family and friends. Fellowship over food always followed this most special service.

A large part of ministry on a First Nation revolves around funerals. Families, whether on or off the reserve, combine traditional and Christian practices at these times. Complete silence stills the room when the body arrives. Everyone attends. No church, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, or Baptist is large enough for all the people so the services are held in the Family Centre or school gymnasium. From the time the body arrives until after the funeral feast, a fire is built and kept burning.



Ephesians 2:10 inspired my ministry in Mistawasis:

"We are God's
workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus
to do good works,
which God prepared
in advance for us to do."
(NIV)

Another traditional practice at the funeral is when a First Nation's elder would smudge the deceased and the casket with sweet-grass smoke. Also, a special quilt or blanket is placed over the closed half of the casket. As well, a lace or see-through material is draped over the open half of the casket. This material is lifted, exposing the body, so family and friends may come to view the body and offer their respect for the deceased.

In many cases, native drummers and singers open and close the funeral service. Greetings and condolences are often expressed by the local and visiting chiefs or other special guests. The entire congregation views the body for the last time then offers condolences with handshakes and/or hugs to the family members. The family members usually pay their respects to their loved one last.

Before driving to the cemetery, the people gather around the room. The minister leads the closed casket wheeled by the pall bearers, followed by the funeral chapel staff, children carrying the flowers, the family, and then everyone else in a clockwise direction (the way the sun rises) around the room. The casket is then placed in the funeral car or horse-drawn wagon guided by horse riders. All the people follow slowly in vehicles as we travel to the cemetery.

Upon reaching the cemetery, the casket is carried by the pall bearers to the previously-dug grave. The pall

Wedding party at Mistawasis

bearers pin their arm band ribbons to the blanket or quilt-covered casket. After the funeral chapel staff lower the casket into a plywood box in the grave, a male volunteer descends to nail the lid on the box. After the grave is filled, an engraved wooden cross and grave marker are placed at the head. Traditionally, a live tree branch would also be placed at the head. The children place the flowers on the flattened mound over the grave. Led by the family, everyone walks in the clockwise direction around the grave and back to their vehicles without looking back.

Upon returning to the Family Centre, a blessing or silent prayer is offered by a Native elder before a feast begins. A bountiful spread is laid: roast turkey and stuffing, ham (sometimes beef and/or pork), mashed potatoes, gravy, various salads, cold cuts, bread, buns, and often fried and baked bannock. Other tables are laden with deserts: pies, cakes, Jell-O-fruit cups, pan deserts, cookies, and fruit. Any food remaining is taken home by anyone who wishes.

I recall at one wake service, I used the name which I heard over the phone from a funeral home receptionist. The whole congregation erupted with laughter and quickly corrected me, "His name is…." I couldn't help laughing with them and saying, "Thank you for setting me straight!" Thus the people of Mistawasis began my lessons of laughing at myself.

At another wake service for a Kukum (Grandmother) and two grand-daughters tragically killed in a highway accident, I experienced a strong moving of the Spirit. I had shared how the sense of smell would bring back memories of loved ones gone before us. The smell of a dish cooked by Kukum or the perfume of one of the grand-daughters would bring back memories. Moments later as I viewed the bodies of these women, I saw a bottle of perfume resting in the hand of one of the girls. Seeing this caused tears to well up into sobs as I realized the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit. One of the First Nation women near me put her arm around me until my tears and sobs subsided. I felt comforted as I was offering comfort.

When I wasn't preparing worship, wake, or funeral services, I would visit people in their homes or the hospital. Three incidents stand out in my memory. One First Nation elder and member of the church, who was in the hospital, shared many stories about his life. These were my honour to hear. Another time, when I visited an ailing family member in their daughter's home, they remarked that I was one of the very few ministers, who sought them out and prayed for them when they were sick. One lady, who was Roman Catholic, commented that I was the only clergy who prayed for her and her family when I visited. These words of gratitude encouraged me greatly.

Aside from the normal responsibilities of a minister, other aspects of my ministry included leading couples in marriage preparation before their elaborate weddings; helping with Vacation Bible

School during some of the summers; and leading the congregation through a variety of building renovations. I also felt blessed with a very competent treasurer and loyal representative elder.

From May 1, 2010 to January 31, 2016, I worked with these wonderful people who taught me much as I prayed that my presence helped them grow in their faith. As I think about the community, I leave behind one great desire. I pray that the two-kilometer road from the main road to the church will be upgraded. Rainfall causes the dirt road to become impassable and heavy snowfall can shut the road to all vehicles. Both situations cause Sunday services to be cancelled. It is my prayer that the church and the First Nation community will work cooperatively to improve the road and live side by side as God the Great Spirit leads.

Editor's note: Please pray for the congregation of Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church. It is an exciting time for them as they welcome their new minister, the Rev. Katherine Bretzlaff. Pray that the road will be upgraded, and that the new minister will continue this important Presbyterian presence in Mistawasis.

Sisters in Spirit Vigil

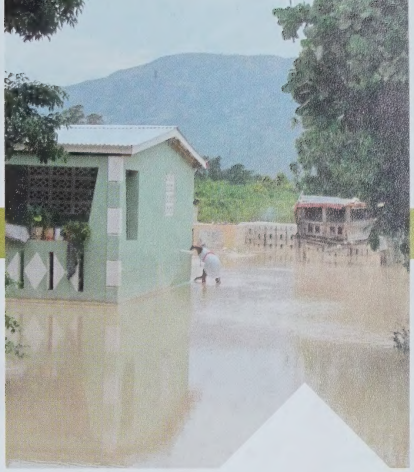
by Carragh Erhardt

On October 4, people across Canada gathered to honour the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women in vigil. These vigils take place annually as a part of the Sisters in Spirit movement which began in 2006. Carragh Erhardt, Healing and Reconciliation Program Assistant of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, represented our church at the Toronto vigil that was put on by the Native Women's Resource Centre. The vigil took place at Allan Gardens.

The event featured traditional drumming, singing, and dancing as well as very moving talks from Cyndy Baskin and Rhonda Lucy. Baskin spoke about losing her step-daughter in 2013 and her experience during the consultations leading up to the announcement that the government was officially launching an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Lucy then described the journey of women who are victims of violence in their personal relationships. Her main message was not to pray for revenge. She talked about the cycle of abuse and how her prayer is that abusers will see the cycle and work to heal themselves so they do not continue the abuse.

During the vigil, participants were asked to approach the stage area and place painted rocks on the ground to represent the Indigenous women who have gone missing or been murdered. Times of reflection such as these are important in the healing process and are a simple way to show support for the healing and reconciliation journey we are on together.

PWS&D Responds to Hurricane Matthew



Hurricane Matthew has struck Haiti leaving devastation in its wake. With the death toll topping 1,000 and entire communities destroyed, the United Nations estimates that 1.4 million people are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance. Homes have been reduced to rubble, crops have been obliterated and livelihoods destroyed. The wind and rain also damaged latrines and contaminated water sources, making the rapid spread of cholera a major concern. PWS&D will be responding through our local partners and the ACT Alliance.

Immediate assistance in the form of food, emergency non-food items, shelter, psychosocial support, and water and sanitation services will be provided by the ACT Alliance in Haiti. Affected communities in Cuba and the Dominican Republic are also receiving assistance through the ACT Alliance.

Please continue to pray for all of the people and communities affected by Hurricane Matthew, including those directly supported by PWS&D.

To contribute to relief efforts, you can make a donation to PWS&D through your church, by mailing a cheque to the office, donating online at WeRespond.ca/donate or calling 1-800-619-7301 x291. Please mark all donations "Hurricane Matthew."

PWS&D has been supporting work in Haiti for several years and was active after the earthquake struck the country in 2010. Through long-term community development programs, PWS&D is helping vulnerable women and girls and working to put an end to gender-based violence. In several rural communities, PWS&D also works to strengthen resilience to climate change and improve situations of food insecurity.

Christmas Worship
Angels—Sent
—with

by Shirley Murdock

Preparation: Gather angel figurines. Place them in a central location as a focus of attention, display them in various locations within the worship area as items of decoration, or bring out a new angel with each reading.

Call to Worship:

Leader: His name was Gabriel—he brought Good News.

People: He spoke to Mary. He spoke to Joseph.

Leader: They sang from the skies—with Good News.

People: They are messengers of God proclaiming Good News.

Introduction:

In the Study Booklet, Angels, by Douglas Connelly, he states, "In the unseen realms of God's universe, powerful and wonderful beings dwell. They move at the speed of light to carry out their Master's will.... They may stand guard over your life and protect you in countless ways. They watch what goes on in the church where you worship and they engage in cosmic battles that you aren't even aware are happening. These fantastic beings are called angels.... Thirty-four of the Bible's sixty-six books talk about angels in detail. Every New Testament writer confirms their existence. The word angel appears more than 250 times in Scripture. This is certainly no isolated truth hidden in the dark corners of the

y God
Good News

Bible! Jesus himself referred to angels as real beings who were involved in every realm of human activity. If you thought angels belong in the same category as sea monsters and trolls—think again!"

Prayer:

God of Good News,

Your people are most grateful for Angels who bring your message of Good News. Encourage us to listen for their announcements and recognize their presence. Enable us to be bearers of Good News to one another through this Season of Advent and all the year through as we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with one another. Keep us still so that we might listen. Amen.

Meditation and Scriptures

Remember the evenings you watched the TV show Touched By An Angel. Remember the lyrical Irish chant of Roma Brownie as she played Monica, the angel-in-training. In every episode, as her presence glowed in the light, she would state, "I am an angel, sent by God, with a message for you." As delightful as that show was, it was produced to entertain an audience. Yet it carried a message through the media that God cares for all his people, most particularly in their times of distress or confusion and provides for our needs by sending the right person to be in the right place at the right time.

Here are some scriptural accounts of God's angelic messengers bringing Good News and telling us not to be afraid, but to welcome their glad tidings of great joy.

Mary hears Good News: Read Luke 1:26–37

Sing Hymn 139: Hark! The herald angels sing (verse 1)

Joseph hears Good News: Read Matthew 1:18–25

Sign Hymn 139: Hark! The herald angels sing (verse 2)

The Shepherds hear the Good News: Read Luke 2:8–14

Sing Hymn 146: Angels from the realms of glory (verses 1 and 2)

The world hears Good News: Read Luke 2:1–7

Sing Hymn 146: Angels from the realms of glory (verses 3 and 5)

The angels protect the new born king: Matthew 2:13–15

Sing Hymn 146: Angels from the realms of glory (verse 4)

Reflection:

I came across a story in the 2006 Christmas Ideals Magazine about a very young angel that I will share with you. Here I tell it to you in my words:
This story speaks about little Johnny, five years old, finding himself drawn down the corridor of the school where a Nativity Play is about to happen. He hears a baby crying and goes in search of the child. As he walks along he thinks about the story of Jesus' birth, as he knows it. He knows there is supposed to be shepherds and wisemen. He recognized that he wasn't anyone as important as those but he keeps going. He sees a light coming from a class room and remembers the star that shone brightly in the sky on the night Jesus was born. He makes his way in that direction. He finds a lady comforting a baby.

As he enters the classroom little Johny asks the lady "Are you Mary?' She replies yes and asks if she should

know Johnny. Johnny says no they probably don't know one another and introduces himself by saying he's not a wiseman or a shepherd and they couldn't come tonight. She tells him the baby's name is Jeffrey.

When Johnny comes closer, the baby stops crying. Johnny says he forgot to bring something for the baby. He smiles at the baby and says, "I know what I can give you. He begins to sing." Mary and Jeffrey listen intently as they hear the well known Christmas words – "Bless all the dear children in your tender care, and take us to heaven to live with you there."

While Johnny has been singing, his own parents recognized he was not with them, came in search and found this holy threesome with baby beaming at the singing child. Their hearts filled with wonder. Together they had witnessed a very young angel in their presence.

Sing Hymn 147: Angels we have heard on high (verses 1 and 2)

Prayer:

Good, Gracious and Loving God
With all that is within us, we praise your Holy Name and give you grateful thanks for the blessings of the Season of Advent and the Celebration of Christ's birth on Christmas. May the gifts of hope and peace, joy and love abide with us throughout these special days and remain in our hearts as we enter a new year filled with opportunity and challenge. May our hearts and minds be alert to hear your announcements of Good News and may we be granted the privilege to entertain angels in Jesus' Name. Amen

Sing Hymn 147: Angels we have heard on high (verses 3 and 4)

Blessing:

All night, all day, angels watching over me,
My Lord
All night, all day, angels watching over me.

He is Coming

by Kathy Hoogsteen

I have always loved music and on occasion I have enjoyed crafting a poem for family or friends. It wasn't until the Fall of 2014 at the Women's Retreat at Crieff Hills that I combined these two interests. Catherine Brown was leading our music program. She challenged the ladies in the group to try and write additional verses for one of the songs we were singing. Feeling inspired, I put pen to paper that night and composed three verses to share

with her the next day. Following the retreat, Catherine asked if I would be willing to try and write a new hymn for advent that she could share with her congregation. "He is coming" is my offering to her and the congregation of First Presbyterian Church in Collingwood. I hope that others enjoy it as well.

He is Coming

(sung to the tune of "Man of sorrows, wondrous name")

To a world that makes us grieve,
Come, oh Saviour, to relieve
All the sorrows we perceive.
Child of hope, He is coming.

To a world that's lost in war,
Come, oh Saviour, we implore.
Born a baby to adore,
Child of peace, He is coming.

To a world that feels despair,
Come, oh Saviour, preach & care,
Spread the gospel everywhere.
Child of joy, He is coming.

To a world that's full of hate,
Come, oh Saviour, while we wait.
On the cross you'll change our fate.
Child of love, He is coming.

For our world is born this day,
In a manger far away,
Son of God with Mary lay,
Child of heaven, He is with us.

Kenyan smallholder farmers

"Tea at Lucia's"

Article about the July 2016 Canadian Foodgrains Bank Tour

by Will Ingram

Lucia invited us to stay for tea.

In most situations, such an invitation would not have seemed particularly noteworthy or remarkable. But in Lucia's house, it was a demonstration of humbling generosity and inspiring hospitality.

The eleven members of our Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) learning group, who had been invited to crowd into her small front room, were travelling in the East African nation of Kenya, in July 2016, seeking to explore how Canadian agricultural development policies were affecting smallholder farmers in a beautiful yet challenged part of the world.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank was established in 1983 with the goal of addressing and ending world hunger. Although it was originally established as a project of the Mennonite Central Committee, it has become one of the most significant organizations in our country for coordinating food assistance, promoting food security, and supporting agricultural research in order to reduce hunger and ensure that all of the people in our world have the opportunity to share in the wealth and abundance of God's creation. Since its inception, it has worked across denominational lines, and now includes 15 church agencies representing over 30 denominations, and providing assistance and development in 48 countries of the

world. The Presbyterian Church in Canada—through Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D)—officially joined the Foodgrains Bank in 1992, and has been an active member agency since that time.

Earlier this year, the Foodgrains Bank invited church representatives from its member agencies to participate in a learning and study tour in Kenya in order to see—firsthand—the ways that support for agricultural research is making a difference in the lives of smallholder farmers in the developing world. As the Foodgrains Bank notes, "over 70% of the people in the world who do not get enough to eat are farmers. In developing countries, most farmers are small-scale, and many of them are women. Despite their hard work, they frequently struggle to grow enough food for their families. It doesn't have to be this way."

At present, the CFGB—particularly through it's "Good Soil" campaign—is seeking to encourage the Government of Canada to increase its support to international aid in general, and to allocate more of the funding towards effective agricultural research. In so doing, the Government of Canada, and the churches of our country, can help to reduce the need for food assistance, and increase food security for the world's most vulnerable people.

As someone who had never travelled in Africa before, I was struck by the beauty of the country: lush green vegetation lining the reddish-coloured dirt roads that we travelled; the vibrant colours of the women's fabrics; the dignity and respect that infused the people's hospitality; the perseverance and strength of smallholder farmers whose livelihood depends on the regular cycles of rain and sun—all was amazing to see.

A significant portion of our focus had been related to learning about the beneficial effects of agricultural techniques, such as "conservation agriculture," which encourages farmers to minimize tillage, develop mulch-based ground cover, and practise inter-cropping practices to encourage the renewal and restoration of the soil. Through a number of governmental and non-governmental partners, the CFGB has been promoting these techniques—and the farmers have attested to the increased yields and beneficial consequences on their farms, their communities, and their families. We had also met with government, church and non-governmental agencies, visited some smallholder farms; shared conversations about the challenges facing Kenyan farmers; and gained new insights into ways that multilateral, bilateral, and partnership development programs affect the lives of individuals struggling to progress towards economic stability, food security, and social safety.

And then we arrived at Lucia's tiny dwelling.

She was an older woman, not yet elderly, but already deserving of rest after a long life, which had often been marked by struggle.

After the disputes and violence that marked the Kenyan elections in 2007, Lucia had become an internally displaced person—one of the millions, who are uprooted from their homes and communities due to the threat of violence or persecution, and seek refuge in other areas within their own countries. According to UN estimates, there are close to 40 million IDPs in the world today.

Lucia had found a place to stay in a tiny rented accommodation in the city of Nakuru. Her front room was filled with a few old couches, and the unfinished walls were sparsely decorated with a calendar from a local veterinarian's office and an alphabet chart to help her grandchildren with their As and Bs. The eleven members of our study group crowded together on the old couches and on a few plastic chairs that she had set out for us.

Through an interpreter, Lucia explained that she had been able to lease a small half-acre of land on which she cultivated the maize and beans that were the staples of her diet. These two crops—which are common in many parts of Africa, including in the homes of many Kenyan smallholder farmers—are not entirely reliable during dry seasons. The stored grains and beans are also particularly susceptible to infestation by weevils and other pests. According to estimates made by the World Food Program (WFP), as much as 1/3 of the world's food supply is lost to post-harvest crop losses, including rodent and pest infestation.

In order to minimize crop losses, farmers such as Lucia typically spread chemical pesticides through the bags in which they store their maize. Not only does this mean that these chemical pesticides are mixed with the maize, but it also adversely affects the taste of this important dietary staple.

But not this season.

A recent agricultural initiative from a number of G20 countries, including Canada as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is involved in seeking an effective mechanism to engage the private and public sectors in finding ways to minimize post-harvest crop losses. While food assistance, especially in times of natural or humanitarian crises, will always be necessary, a more focused effort to encourage effective agricultural development policies may be one of the best ways for the Canadian government to participate in helping developing nations to strengthen their agricultural output and, in so doing, safeguard their people against hunger and food insecurity.

The project that we were exploring, with Lucia, involved the engagement of private sector companies in the marketing, sale, and distribution of relatively inexpensive,

hermetically-sealed crop storage bags. The bags eradicate the need for chemical pesticides, prolong the life of the maize, are re-useable for subsequent harvests, and protect against infestation by rodents and insects. As a result, the bags significantly increase food security for smallholder farmers, and often increase the amounts of surplus maize that can be used to supplement the farmer's income. Many of the farmers that we met were already starting to use this additional income to provide for other necessities of life, and even to contribute toward child-related expenses such as school fees.

As I sat in Lucia's tiny home that day, it was fascinating to realize that a creative agricultural development policy initiative that had emerged in conversations between the most powerful nations and leaders of the world could have such a direct, positive, and beneficial effect on the life of a hard-working woman such as Lucia. It was also encouraging to realize that we can all be involved by supporting organizations, such as Presbyterian World Service & Development and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, by encouraging our Members of Parliament to increase support for bilateral and multilateral development programs, learning more about initiatives such as the CFGB 'Good Soil Campaign,' and remembering that small, creative solutions have the potential to make life-changing differences in the lives of those, who cannot take our common prayer for daily bread for granted.

Which is exactly what we experienced as we watched Lucia proudly reach her hands deep into the storage bag and pull out rich handfuls of healthy, pest-free maize. It was a joyful sight—a woman holding the fruit of her hard work, humbly yet proudly showing us what can be done with respect, creativity, and imagination. With a smile on her face, she let the kernels of maize slide back through her fingers, and re-sealed the bag.

And then, she poured our tea.

Grain storage bags in a local marketplace.

Women

"We have learned the val
given us courage and mac

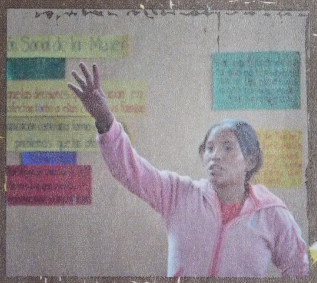
Opening Prayer

Mighty and tender God,
voice of the voiceless,
power of the powerless;
we praise you for your vision
of a community of wholeness,
a realm of peace,
in which all who hunger and thirst are nourished,
in which the stranger is welcomed,
the hurting are healed, and the captives set free.
Guide us by your truth and love
until we and all your people
make manifest your reign of justice and compassion.
Amen.[1]

Guatemala

by Karen Bokma

we have as women, which has
appy."



Introduction

Guatemala is the most populous country in Central America, with one of the highest population growth rates in Latin America. Over half of Guatemala's people are under the age of 24, making it the youngest population in Latin America. Birth rates are markedly higher among rural and indigenous populations.

Income distribution in Guatemala is highly unequal, with the richest 20% of the population consuming more than 51% of the country's resources. Almost a quarter of the population lives in extreme poverty—these statistics are even more stark for indigenous people, where almost 40% of the population live in extreme poverty.

Indigenous Maya women and men make up over half of Guatemala's population. Though they have a rich culture, they also experience oppression and discrimination in addition to deep-rooted poverty. A lack of economic

"I learned that I have value as a person and that no one should abuse me."

opportunity and environmental concerns such as climate change, encroaching mining operations and deforestation make it difficult for families to break cycles of poverty.

The poverty affecting many indigenous Guatemalans is rooted in centuries of colonial history, exacerbated by a 36-year civil war that only ended in 1996. The Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification (set up after the end of the civil war) estimated that 83% of the 200,000 victims of the war were Maya—with many stating that the Guatemalan state committed genocide against the Maya people during the civil war. On top of the killings, many families were displaced from long-held ancestral land during the conflict.

Today, Maya women in particular bear the greatest day-to-day hardships. Many Maya women have not had the opportunity to learn to read and write. Most of them have little access to land and struggle to find power or a place in government or church structures.

In a culture that values machismo and places men in positions of power and authority over women, there are additional struggles women in Guatemala face. Household work and family care are often seen as invaluable contributions to the household. Many women suffer domestic abuse and have nowhere to turn.

Valentina's Story

Valentina lives in the community of Tuixcajchis in the Guatemalan highlands. Now widowed, Valentina regularly experienced domestic violence while her husband was alive. As a mother of seven children, she felt she had no recourse

other than staying in the abusive situation.

Valentina

Since her husband's death, Valentina has become an agriculture promoter through a Presbyterian World Service & Development program. Along with teaching women how to care for the soil and use locally available resources to grow more food, Valentina often shares about her personal history in order to help them learn from her. "I'm brave enough now and will never get tired of sharing my experiences."

When Valentina first signed up to be an agriculture promoter, she thought she'd just learn how to farm her land better, but she gained so much more. "Through trainings I learned that we could change long-held patterns—not just for farming, but for other parts of our lives as well. I'm grateful to God because I learned the most important thing is people, not things. I now understand my reality and the reality of life as women."

A Note from the Photographer

In an interview I did with some women's leaders, they talked about socializing and how girls were told they couldn't play certain sports, like basketball. I asked if they played and they said they loved it, but didn't get many chances to play. The next day, the women were meeting in the municipal hall, with a small basketball court next door. I asked them if they wanted to play during the break and they jumped at the chance. And they were amazingly vigorous about it; it resembled rugby more than basketball! I like the images because they don't fit the normal stereotypes about indigenous women.

~ Paul Jeffrey

Biblical Reflection

Read Luke 18:1–5. Consider the following questions in light of the parable and the rest of the information in the study.

1. What can we learn from the widow's persistence in seeing an injustice addressed?
2. How is God unlike the unjust judge in the parable we read?
3. Share a story from your own experience about change that has come about from those who are seemingly powerless in their struggle for justice.
4. How might the widow's persistence serve as a model for us as we strive for justice and empowerment of vulnerable groups?

What Our Church is Doing

Presbyterian World Service & Development has been working in Guatemala for over 20 years. PWS&D supports local partners, who have long-standing relationships with communities, built on a foundation of trust and respect.

Throughout that time, PWS&D has supported families to ensure they have food for today and for the future, provided accompaniment to indigenous partners and communities, and worked to empower women to advocate for their rights and attain positions of leadership within their communities.

Along with the agriculture training, women like Valentina receive literacy and business training. They form groups where they learn together to produce crafts to sell and start vegetable gardens to nourish their families and earn incomes from the excess produce.

Earning an income and taking charge of their livelihoods gives these women confidence and significantly impacts their quality of life. As women increase their household incomes, they gain a greater voice in the decision-making in their households. Through this, they are achieving new levels of independence and assuming leadership roles in their households and communities.

The groups also offer support and friendship. "I wish all women would understand the importance of participating in a group," Valentina shares. "It improves our way of living and sharing with others."

Many of these women have to overcome a number of struggles to participate in the program—throughout their lives they haven't been encouraged to pursue more, they are fearful about trying something new, or they have to persuade skeptical spouses—who are sometimes abusive—that involvement in the program will be beneficial to the whole family.

Jacinta, a member of Valentina's community, shares how at the beginning of her involvement things were difficult because everything was new and challenging, but that "over the years we have lost the fear. We have kept working and seen the results in our families and our communities. We have learned the value that we have as women, which has given us courage and made us happy."

Brenda had shared a similar history as Valentina, except it was her father-in-law who abused her. When she finally decided to leave her husband, she found

it tremendously difficult to support her children. But through involvement in the group, she learned skills that allowed her to support for her family. She also "learned that I have value as a person and that no one should abuse me."

These women are serving as agents of change in their communities. Having found new confidence in their roles as Maya women, mothers and leaders, they are providing for their families, but also inspiring futures where some of the most marginalized women are empowered, educated and able to claim their rights.

To Think About

1. Presbyterian World Service & Development is working with local partners in Guatemala to provide support to women and aid in their empowerment. Why is it so important that local organizations and communities lead the way on these issues?

2. Reflecting on some of the issues women in Guatemala are faced with, where can we find commonalities and differences between our lived experiences here in Canada?

3. The women that PWS&D is supporting in Guatemala are indigenous. Are there experiences felt by these women that are also faced by indigenous women in Canada?

Additional Activities

- The Presbyterian Church in Canada created a mission study several years ago called *Making Connections: Maya People of Guatemala and Aboriginal People of Canada*. Visit http://presbyterian.ca/resources-mission/#studies to download the study.
- Watch the documentary *Gold Fever*. *Gold Fever* received the International Federation of Human Rights in Film Award for sharing the story of three women resisting the threat to their ancestral lands from global mining operations. Visit www.goldfevermovie.com for more information.
- Rigoberta Menchú is a Guatemalan Quiche woman whose family lived and worked in poor conditions on a plantation. She never had the chance to go to school. Her parents were killed during the civil war, and Rigoberta was finally forced to flee Guatemala in fear for her life. In an effort to bring about change for her people, she became a human rights activist and writer—winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992. Read her autobiography, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, to learn more about her life.

Something for Single Women

In a society where marriage and children are often held up as the ideal, it can be difficult for single women to find their place. Aurelia, however, has risen to the challenge in her community. With the support of her father, she became an agro-ecological promoter where she has had the opportunity to see changes in the lives and families of those around her. She is thankful for the support she received from her father, who encouraged her to take the training, "so that I can do my best."

Closing Prayer

From the cowardice that dares not face new truth,
from the laziness that is contented with half-truth,
from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
Good Lord, deliver me.
Amen.[2]

---

[1] Anonymous

[2] Boook of Praise, #397

Walking for the First Time in Malawi by Anna Muir

After taking a few steps with her first set of prosthetics, nine-year-old Callista's face lit up with a wide smile. For the first time in her life, the young girl was walking.

Callista was born with lower leg problems. Due to complications in surgery, both her legs had to be amputated. Callista got from place to place on her knees or on her mother's back. Her parents couldn't afford mobility equipment.

Now, the burden felt by Callista and her family has been lifted.

Callista received a new set of prosthetics from the PWS&D-supported Tidzalerana Disabled Children's Program in southern Malawi. Tidzalerana means 'we care for one another'. Led by dedicated volunteers, the club works to provide people who have physical and developmental disabilities with nutritious meals, equipment and assistive devices, as well as practical skills, and a safe place where they feel loved and accepted.

The cheerful young girl told volunteers that she couldn't wait to go to school and walk tall alongside her friends.

Callista's life wasn't the only one that changed that day.

Eleven-year-old Timothy goes with his grandmother to Tidzalerana on Tuesday afternoons. Though he was born without the use of his legs, the energetic boy enjoys racing his friends in the schoolyard, propelling himself forward with his hands.

To help improve his quality of life, Tidzalerana provided him with a corrective brace for his knee, ankle, and foot.

After strapping on the brace, Timothy took a few cautious steps with the aid of his walker. If the look of determination on his face showed anything, it was that with time and physiotherapy, Timothy would be off racing again in no time.

For both Callista and Timothy, the sense of community at Tidzalerana has been vital, helping them overcome challenges and realize their full potential.

But this day was one they will never forget. Their smiles are a testament to just how transformative support from Tidzalerana can be.

Cariboo Presbyterian Church by Ronda Bosch (Reprinted from Northern Light)

Visitors from Norman Kennedy Presbyterian Church

On June 30, five people piled into a van to drive from Regina, Saskatchewan, to the interior region of British Columbia, called the Cariboo. The four young adults were a part of a study and fellowship group

for the last few years where they discussed the Bible, their lives, and their Christian service in the world. They wanted to experience 'mission' in the context of how and where the Presbyterian Church in Canada defines it and does it.

As part of the Norman Kennedy Presbyterian (NKP) congregation, they are aware of local inner city mission, through the interdenominational work of Soul's Harbour, and also supporters of native mission, specifically Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry. The four young adults are also part of the NKP praise team and provide leadership in children's ministry, both Vacation Bible School and Sunday School.

Together with their pastor, a Lay Missionary, who has been serving Norman Kennedy Church for nine years, they prayed and planned a trip to become better acquainted with 'house church' and 'on reserve' types of ministry, both of which could become more significant in our prairie context.

We arrived in Williams Lake on July 1. We thoroughly enjoyed many aspects of our visit and trip. We saw beautiful places, met wonderful people, participated in fun activities, provided leadership, and absorbed information about culture, mission, and ministry.

When asked about their insights and learnings, each participant wrote the following thoughts:

Samuel Jung

Compared to a Norman Kennedy Church worship service, the house church service was very simple and flexible. There was no invitation to stand or written prayer. I feel like the service was totally different from ours. I have never experienced this kind of worship service before, and it was a very unique experience. They have pastors, but the pastors did not do everything, not even the preaching. They take turns with everything, and that was very interesting to see.

Mabel Kotei

When I think of all the house churches we attended during our mission trip, I ponder on the words of the Bible which stress that the church is not the building, but the people. I learned that coming together to worship the Lord doesn't require a certain number of people and that even with just two or three people worshiping the Lord, one can sense the presence of the Lord in their midst. I liked how unrestrained the house churches were. It was comfortable, familiar, and welcoming. We exchanged our understanding of the Word and strengthened our faith in the process.

Jessica Kotei

I learned that house church is not about the church building but the people that make up the body of Christ. Since Christ calls us to lift up, teach, and encourage one another so do the members of the house church, like a family. I believe the native

ministry will need more support from us, financially and in our prayers. Jon and Shannon involve themselves in the majority of the events in Nazko and this shows the love of God through them to the people. This made me want to strive to extend showing God's love beyond my church and workplace.

Rachel Kotei

In spite of the difference in the terrain, I feel house churches would work as well in Saskatchewan as they do in the Cariboo. Our communities are just as far apart and it is heartbreaking to realize that several of these communities and small towns have had to close down their churches in the last few years. There has been no report available on how our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ have been faring spiritually since then.

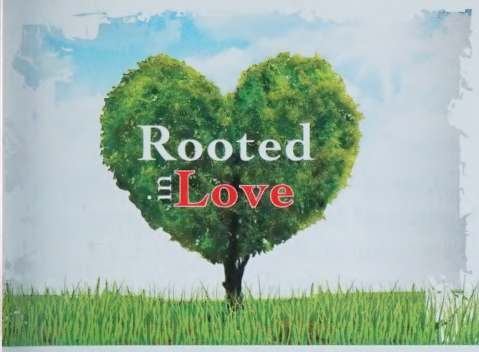
My thoughts have been on Paul and his numerous letters to each of the places he introduced to Christ, and I think of the possibilities and hope the Cariboo Presbyterian Church gives me. As with native ministry, the openness, warmth, and homey welcome we found in house churches would be a step in fostering a trusting relationship like Jon and Shannon have with the people of Nazko.

Having run a five-day Vacation Bible School on the Mistawasis reserve during the second week of August, I was more aware of the hesitation and suspicion the children and their parents had in trying the program. It saddened me that they did not let themselves enjoy the wonderful program the synod had provided until the fourth day. As a result, I believe there is potential in trying house churches in our Native missionary outreach.

Ronda Bosch

I was pleased to meet and enjoy Christian community with fellow 'lay missionaries' (Ginny & Bruce) and minister/pastor colleagues (Jon & Shannon) during the visit to the Cariboo. I was encouraged in my conversations about the church, specifically about the role of lay leadership. I enjoyed looking through the picture albums and hearing some of the stories of the beginnings, growth, changes, and challenges of this unique ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. I envision that such ministry (house ministry/small Christian communities) will become more widespread in the future.

In Saskatchewan, we have so many small churches struggling to stay open and to be relevant in their communities. I believe a mission plan is needed that recognizes the need for people to have a caring community to share life with, specifically faith life, and to find a common plan of being the hands and feet and heart of Jesus in their neighbourhoods. The visit to the Cariboo has inspired me and renewed my passion to be part of effective God-honouring ministry.



Rooted in Love

National Presbyterian
Women's Gathering 2017

Waiting...in Anticipation for the 2017 National Women's Gathering!

Do you as a woman or a group of church women ever find yourself feeling like you are all alone in your faith journey? I think about Ruth's words to Naomi, "Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16 NRSV). These words speak about the importance of walking our journey in community.

This is why I am so excited about the upcoming National Women's Gathering, having experienced the Gathering in 2014! This event offers such an amazing opportunity to be affirmed in our faith journey as Christian women from across the country, all walks of life, and from churches of all sizes.

I think back to the 2014 with yet living memories of the key note speakers who moved me deeply. Also, I will never forget the final day when one of the First Nations women from Winnipeg Inner City Mission spoke about how the event had been transformational in her life!

This event afforded me an opportunity to reconnect with friends from previous churches, to meet new people, and to visit my choice of workshops to nourish my faith.

I came away determined to encourage more women from my congregation to go and am excited to say that we have at least five who have decided to attend. I know that we will be blessed by this event.

If you haven't ever attended, make this coming event your first and please track me down as I would love to meet you and hear your story!

Peace, Gwen Ament

In the Society

Presbyterial

Brockville Presbyterial met on September 9 in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Prescott.

The Rev. Ian MacLean, Moderator of Seaway Glengarry Presbytery, warmly welcomed us to this historic and beautiful sanctuary. He also spoke of his long-term friendship and admiration for our upcoming speaker, the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams, Associate Secretary of International Ministries.

Donna McIlveen, assisted by Mary Moorehead and Henry Donkersteeg, led worship on the theme, Seize the Hope through the Word, based on Romans 5:1–5. She reminded us that faith is living hope in Christ, who is living in us.

Our speaker, the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams, spoke about her work in mentoring students, who are interested in serving in International mission, equipping personal to serve, and monitoring programs and funding.

Circulation News

I have received a few calls asking if *Glad Tidings* magazine is continuing. The quick answer is YES! We are thankful to receive a government subsidy which assists in publishing *Glad Tidings* and we have already received our funding for the 2017 year.

We are also thankful to all of you regular subscribers. *Glad Tidings* is only able to continue because of you. Once again this year, we ask that you consider what you can do to increase our subscription numbers. Let your friends and family in the church know about *Glad Tidings.* Yes, we cover news from the Women's Missionary Society, but we also inform the WMS, and others in the church, about mission that is happening across the church and around the world.

If your congregational library, your minister, your Clerk of Session, or the head of your mission committee, doesn't receive *Glad Tidings*, will your group give them a gift subscription? Not only will it spread the news of the WMS, it will increase their knowledge of mission.

We hope to continue to tell the story of mission for many years of come. With your help, we will!

For more information, or to subscribe to *Glad Tidings*, contact the office at 1-800-619-7301, or email Gladtidings@presbyterian.ca.

Remembering

Jeanette Mullin
Kirk-on-the-Hill
Presbyterian Church
Fonthill ON

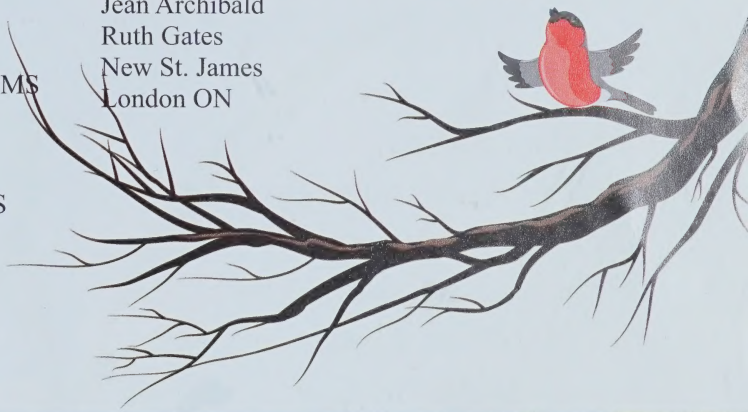
Marnie Forrest
St. Andrew's,
Strathcona Park WMS
Kingston ON

Estelle Andrews
St. Andrew's WMS
Kitchener ON

Isabel McMillan
Bessie McMurchy
WMS, Knox
Listowel ON

Jean Archibald
Ruth Gates
New St. James
London ON

Norean Cox
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian Women,
St. Andrew's
Scarborough ON



Presbyterian
World Service
&Development
Inspired by God's promise of abundant life, PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.
Be a part of this vision.
Donate Today.
We
Respond
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7, 1-800-619-7301 ext. 291, WeRespond.ca

What will your gift grow?

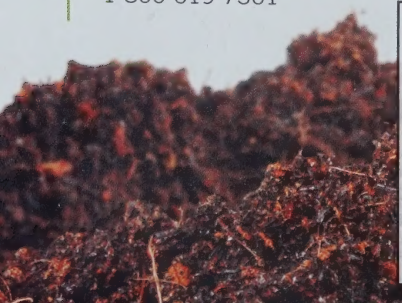
Discover how you can turn your assets into a gift that will change lives and grow the mission of the church – for generations to come.

provisionaries

To make a bequest, acquire a gift annuity or give a gift of stock to a PCC ministry, contact:

Stewardship & Planned Giving
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Dr. Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
www.presbyterian.ca/provisionaries
1-800-619-7301

PM40013283 R9517



Please report any errors/changes in address